



DC
COMICS™

Spinning out of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller
BATMAN: THE COURT OF OWLS

THE NEW 52!

BATMAN

"NIGHT OF THE OWLS IS
RAMPING UP AND IT IS AWESOME...
A GREAT EVENT FOR ALL THE
CHARACTERS IN GOTHAM CITY,
NOT JUST BATMAN." — IGN

NIGHT OF THE OWLS



Capullo
+fco

SCOTT SNYDER GREG CAPULLO



BATMAN

NIGHT OF THE OWLS

FINCH
2012
FRIENDLY
COX



BATMAN

NIGHT OF THE OWLS

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BATMAN: NIGHT OF THE OWLS

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Originally published in single magazine form in ALL-STAR WESTERN 9, BATMAN 8-11, BATMAN ANNUAL 1,
BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT 9, DETECTIVE COMICS 9, BATGIRL 9, BATWING 9, BIRDS OF PREY 9,
NIGHTWING 8-9, BATMAN AND ROBIN 9, CATWOMAN 9 and RED HOOD AND THE OUTLAWS 9 Copyright © 2012 DC Comics.
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DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019
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PREVIOUSLY...

Batman had believed the Court of Owls was just a nursery rhyme. As a young boy, he'd even honed his detective skills trying to prove that they existed, but despite careful investigation, he never found any proof that a secret, owl-obsessed cabal ruled Gotham City.

That was before the Talon, the Court's legendary assassin, tried to kill Bruce Wayne in the middle of his meeting with mayoral candidate Lincoln March. It took all of his wits and skills as the Dark Knight to survive the deadly plummet from the top of Old Wayne Tower.

Batman uncovered the Court's nests, hidden in secret floors of Wayne-constructed buildings, dating as far back as the 19th century. The Talon ambushed the Caped Crusader while he was investigating a lead, thereby capturing him—and proceeded to hunt the Dark Knight through a labyrinth for the Court's sadistic amusement!

While trapped in the Court's maze, he discovered evidence of a longstanding rivalry between the Owls and the Wayne family... even proof that they were responsible for the death of his great-great-grandfather, the architect Alan Wayne. After a strenuous battle with the Talon, only Batman's incredible perseverance allowed him to make a harrowing escape—almost at the cost of his own life.

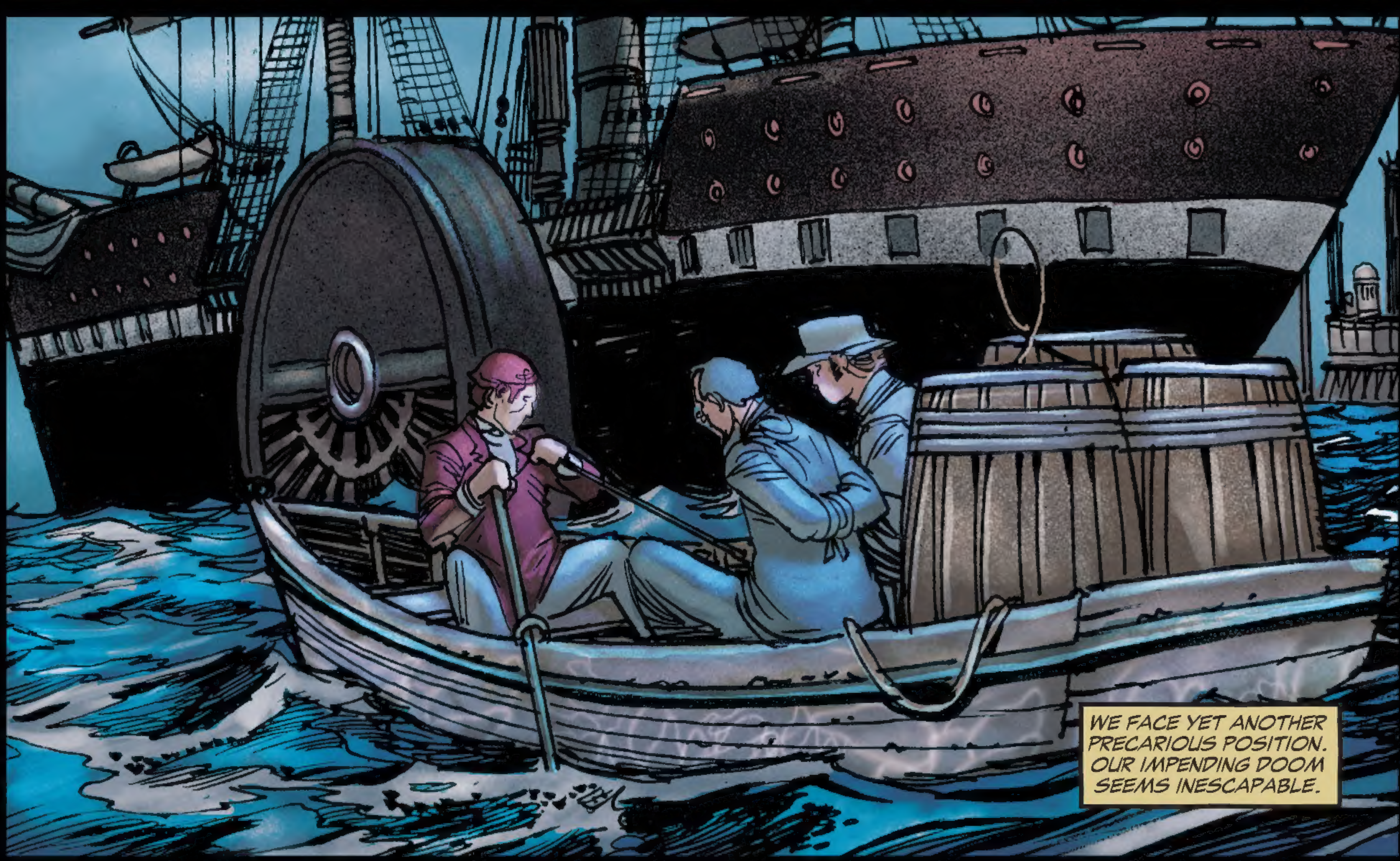
In defeat, the Court abandoned their champion. Upon examining his bested enemy, Batman made several shocking discoveries. The Talon he'd fought was William Cobb, Dick Grayson's great-grandfather—the Court recruited their killers from Haly's Circus—and they had intended to make Dick their next executioner! Even more worrisome was the fact that the process by which Cobb had been reanimated endowed him with metahuman regenerative abilities, which only extreme cold could suppress.

The Court unleashed their ultimate offensive. They awakened all of the Talons from previous generations who, like William Cobb, had been kept in suspended animation—and set them all loose on Gotham City! Against a plague of nearly undying assassins, Batman and his allies are in for one LONG night...

...THE NIGHT OF THE OWLS HAS BEGUN!



LADRONI
2012



WE FACE YET ANOTHER
PRECARIOUS POSITION.
OUR IMPENDING DOOM
SEEMS INESCAPABLE.



ANY OTHER MAN
WOULD CERTAINLY
BE HELPLESS.

BUT THEN AGAIN,
JONAH HEX IS NO
ORDINARY MAN.
I NOTICED THE
NECKLACE RIGHT
AWAY, THE ONE
THAT BELONGS
TO NIGHTHAWK.



CLEARLY IT DOES
POSSESS SOME
FORM OF ANCIENT
INDIAN MAGIC.



YA DO
EVERYTHING
AH ASKED,
DOC?

OF COURSE
I DID!

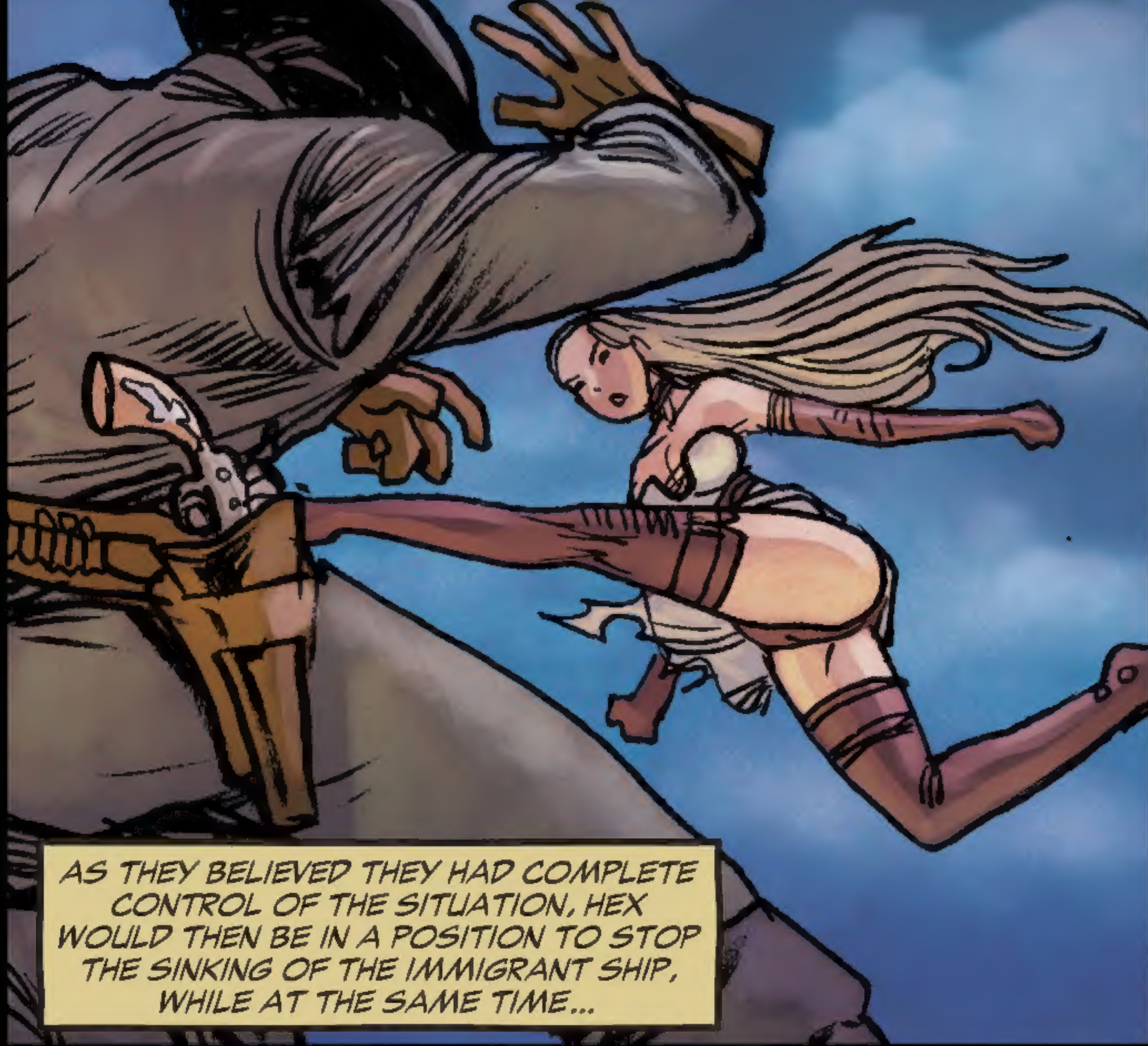
HEX'S PLAN WAS BRILLIANT IN EVERY DETAIL.
I WAS TO BE ARRESTED KNOWING FULL WELL
A MEMBER OR MEMBERS OF THE AUGUST 7
WERE PART OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

NIGHT OF THE OWLS VENGEANCE IN THE Big Easy

JIMMY PALMIOTTI
and JUSTIN GRAY, Writers
MORITAT, Artist
GABRIEL BAUTISTA, Colorist
ROB LEIGH, Letterer



PLAYING THE HAPLESS IDIOT, I WAS TO DIVULGE INFORMATION THAT WOULD DRAW OUR ENEMIES OUT OF HIDING, AND FORCE THEM TO GATHER IN ONE LOCATION.



AS THEY BELIEVED THEY HAD COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION, HEX WOULD THEN BE IN A POSITION TO STOP THE SINKING OF THE IMMIGRANT SHIP, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME...



...NIGHTHAWK AND CINNAMON WOULD TAKE DIRECT ACTION AGAINST THE TERRORISTS.



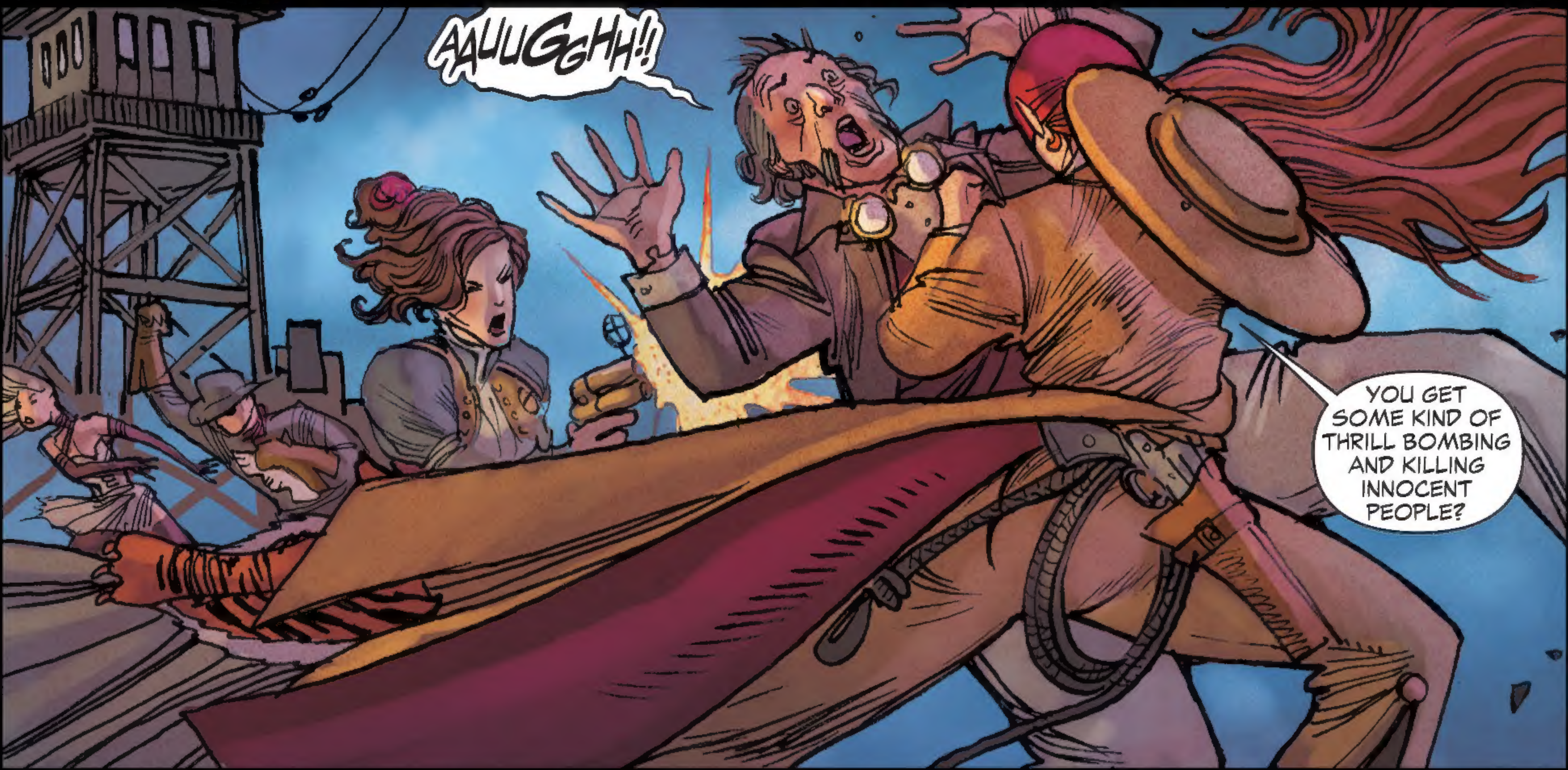
MEN WHO COVER THEIR FACES TEND TO BE CRIMINALS OR OUTLAWS. WHY DO YOU WEAR A MASK, VIGILANTE?

BECAUSE I DON'T DO THIS FOR PERSONAL RECOGNITION.



WHAT I DO... IS FOR JUSTICE.

WHUFF!!





YOU SHOULD HAVE PULLED YOUR GUNS FIRST.

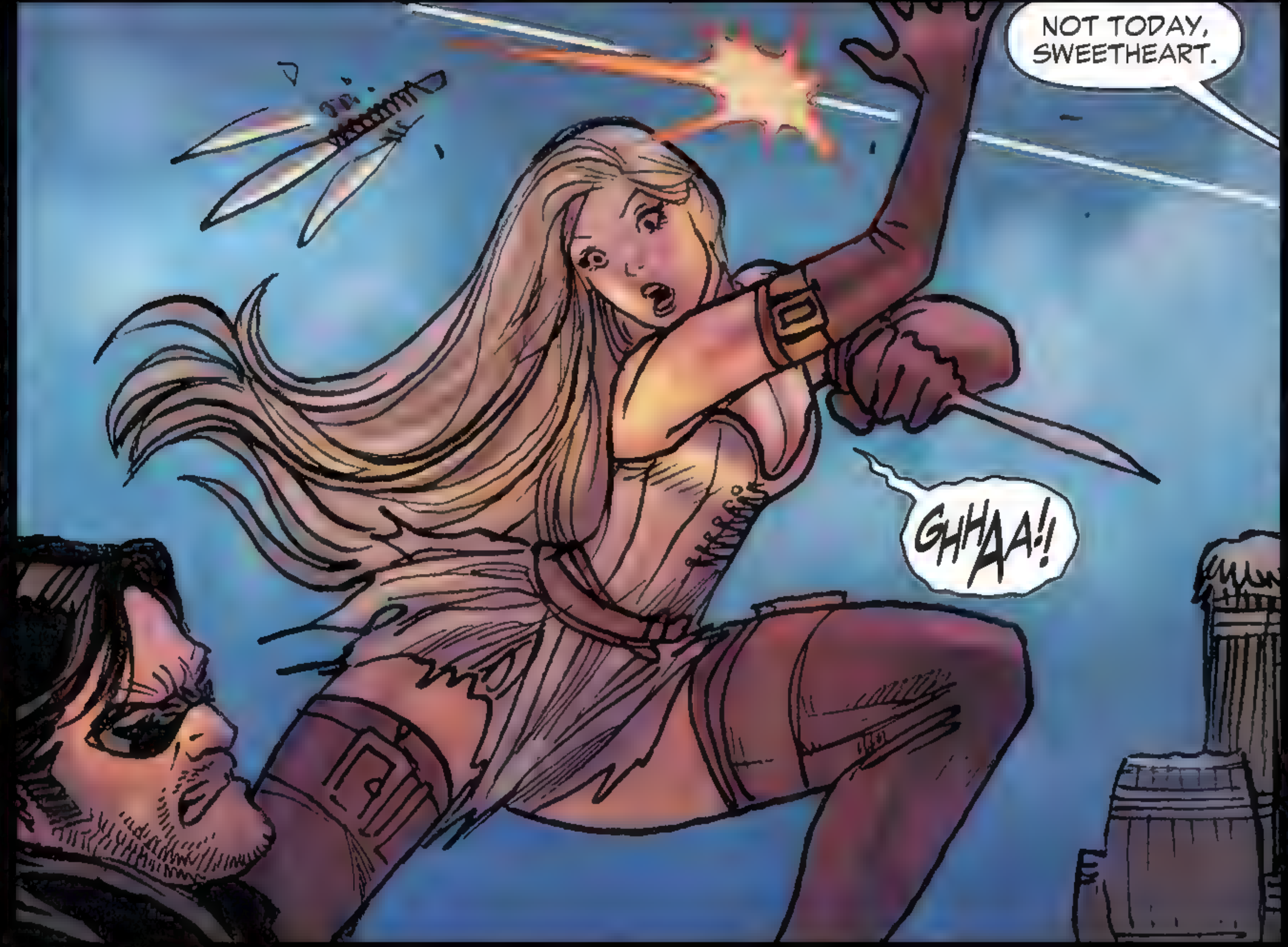
I WANT TO SEE YOU IN PRISON... NOT A CEMETERY.



THAT BIT OF IDIOTIC REASONING IS GOING TO BE THE DEATH OF YOU, SIR.



AND YOU WON'T NEED A MASK BECAUSE NO ONE WILL RECOGNIZE YOU WHEN I SPLIT YOUR FACE OPEN!



NOT TODAY, SWEETHEART.

GHAA!



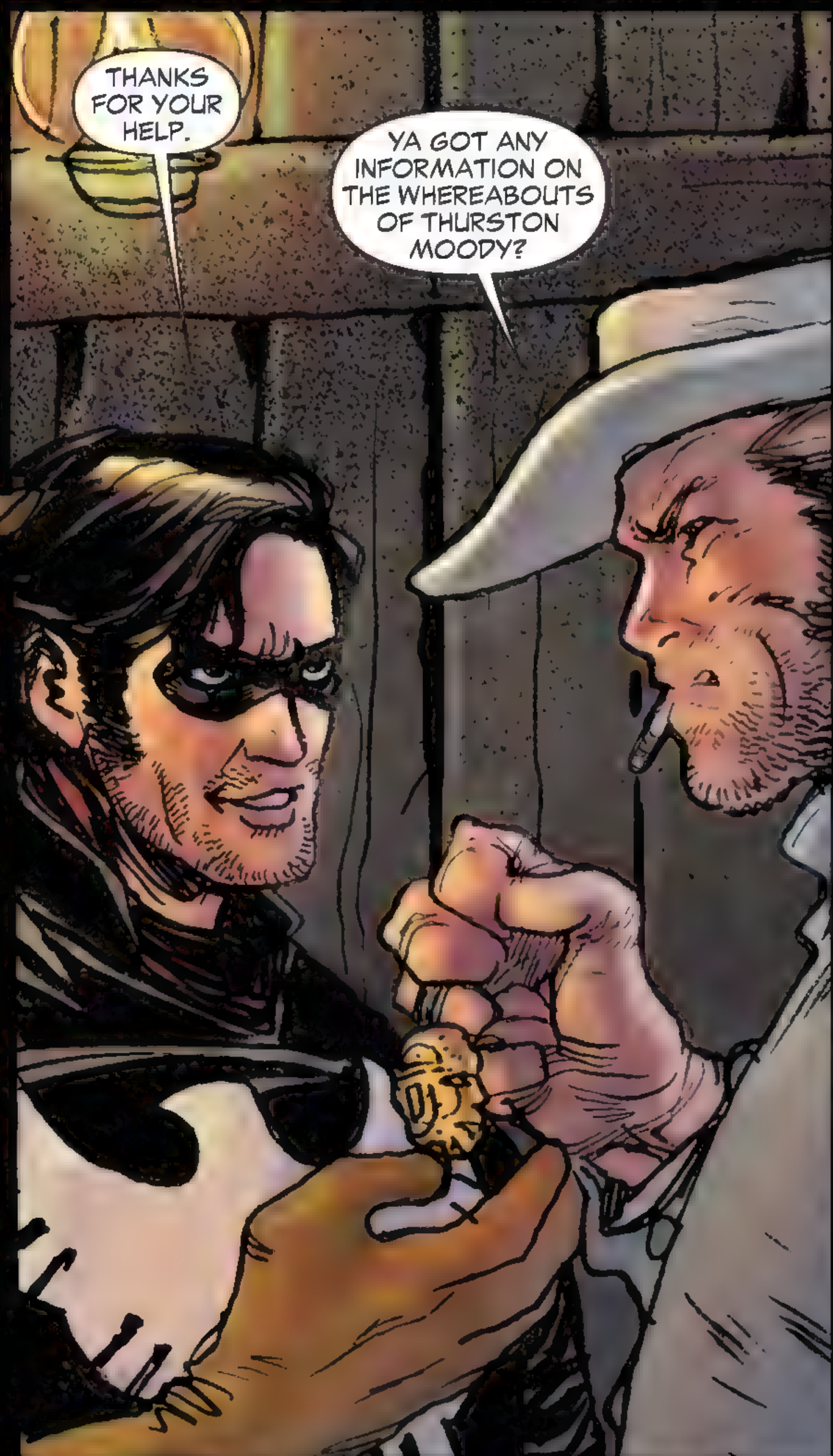
DROP IT OR I DROP YOU.

FINE...

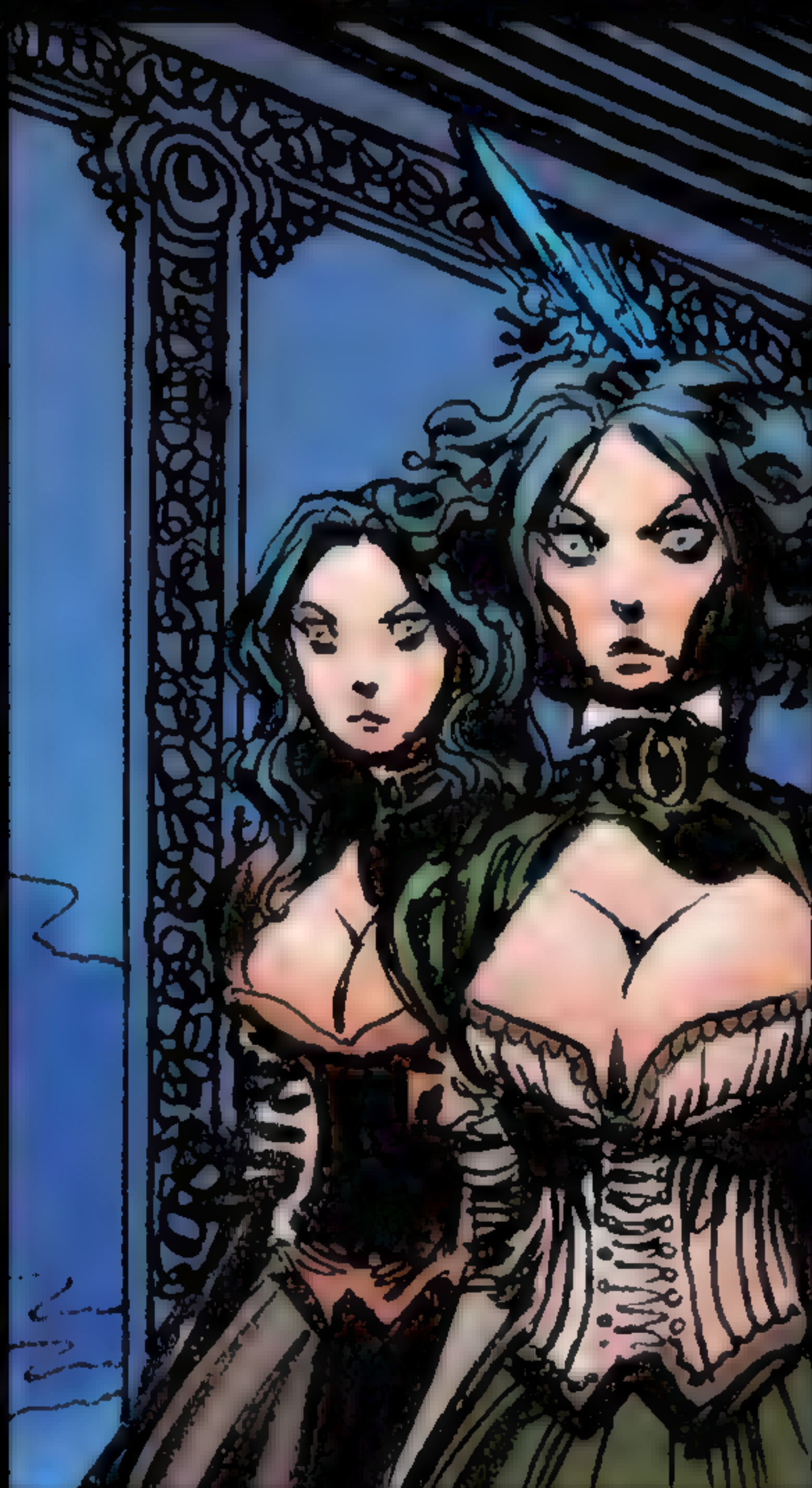


IT WUZ FUN WHILE IT LASTED.

WE'LL HAVE FUN AGAIN, DON'T YOU WORRY, HEX.



HOURS LATER,
ON THE OTHER SIDE
OF THE CITY...







N-N-N-NO...
I KEPT MY MOUTH
SHUT! THAT'S WHY
I LEFT GOTHAM!
TO PROTECT...!

YOU POSE A
RISK...A RISK THEY
ARE NOT WILLING
TO TAKE.



GREED AND
STUPIDITY ARE
UNACCEPTABLE.





IT WAS
HEX AND
ARKHAM!

YOU HIRED HEX.
YOU SET THEM
ON THAT PATH.

POLICE!
HELP!
SOMEONE HELP
ME!

P-P-P-PLEASE...

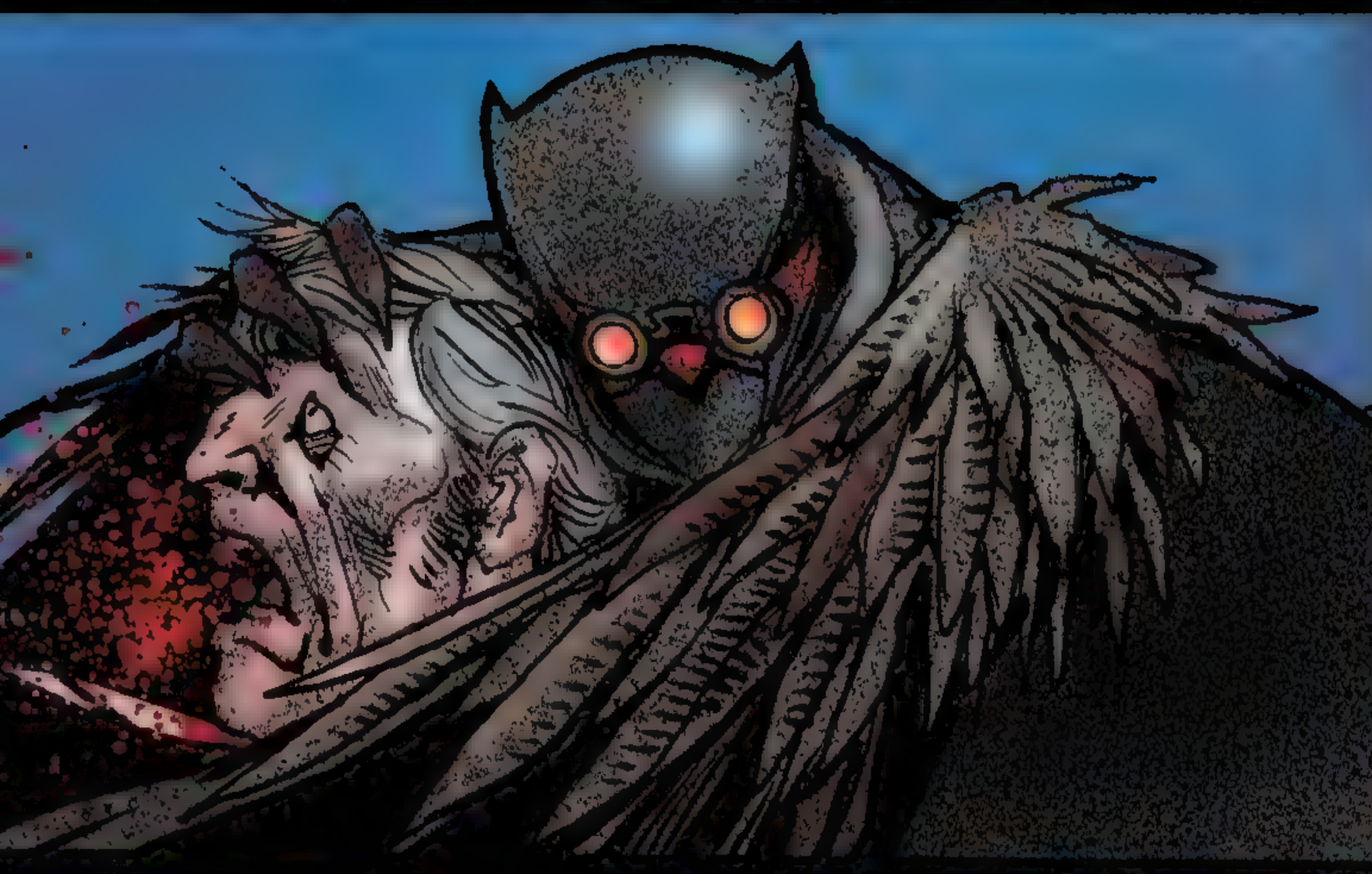
SHHH...

PAA-
CH-
QWW



WHAT IN
GOD'S NAME
IS THAT?

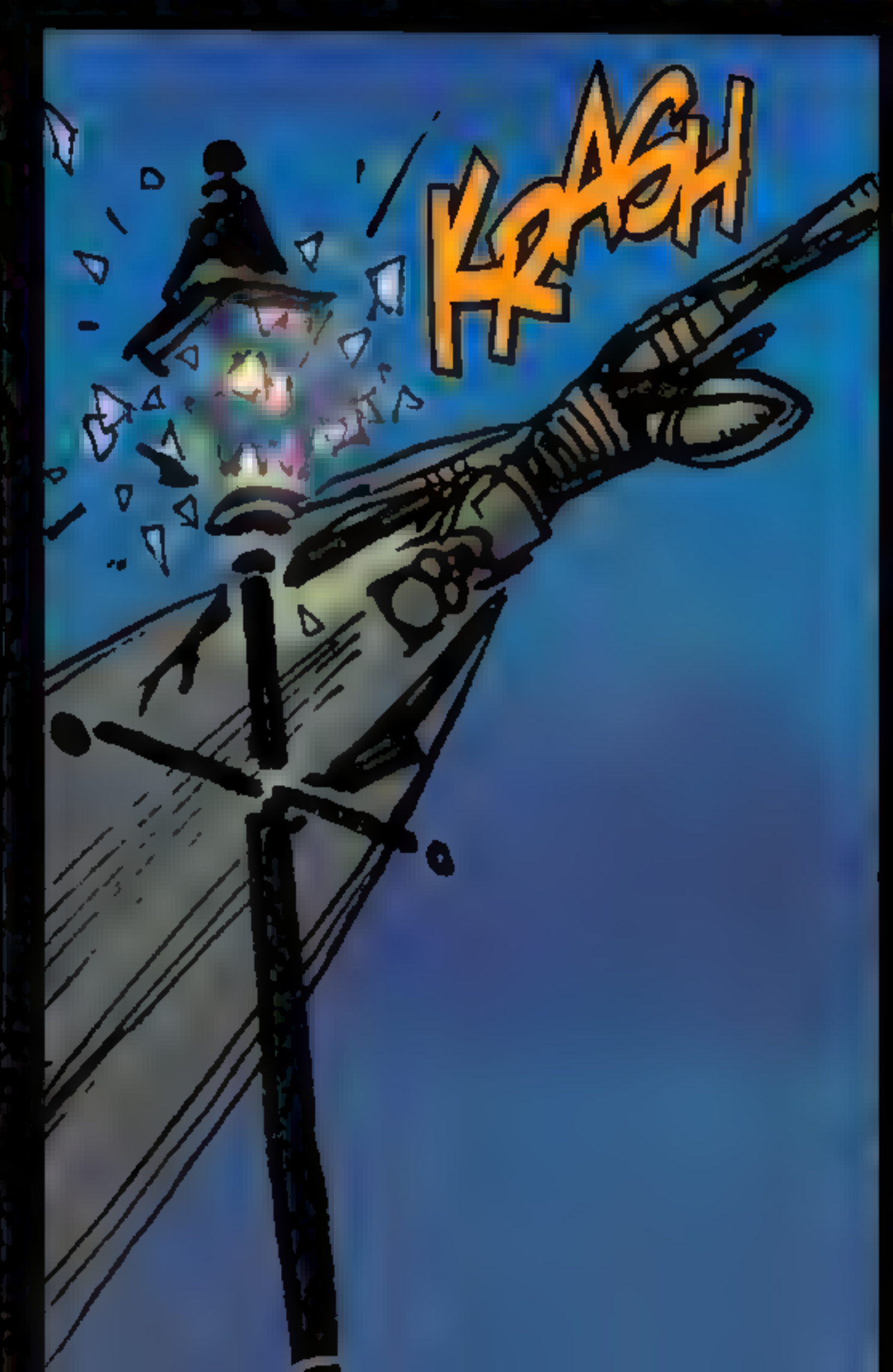
GIT OFF HIM.
SLOWLY!



PACHOWN



PZING



KRASH



POW

PZING

KRANG





SHE
APPEARED
DRESSED AS
A BIRD.

AN OWL.

I SUPPOSE YOU
ALREADY HAVE A THEORY
WHY AN ACROBAT, POSSIBLY OF
CHINESE DESCENT, AND DRESSED
AS AN OWL, JUST MURDERED THE
FORMER HEAD OF GOTHAM
SANITATION?



NOPE.



WAIT...I SEEM
TO REMEMBER AN
INORDINATE NUMBER
OF STUFFED OWLS
ON DISPLAY AT
THE MOODY
RESIDENCE.

AT THE TIME
I THOUGHT IT NOTHING
MORE THAN MOODY BEING
A TAXIDERMY ENTHUSIAST.
PERHAPS THERE IS SOME
CORRELATION
BETWEEN...

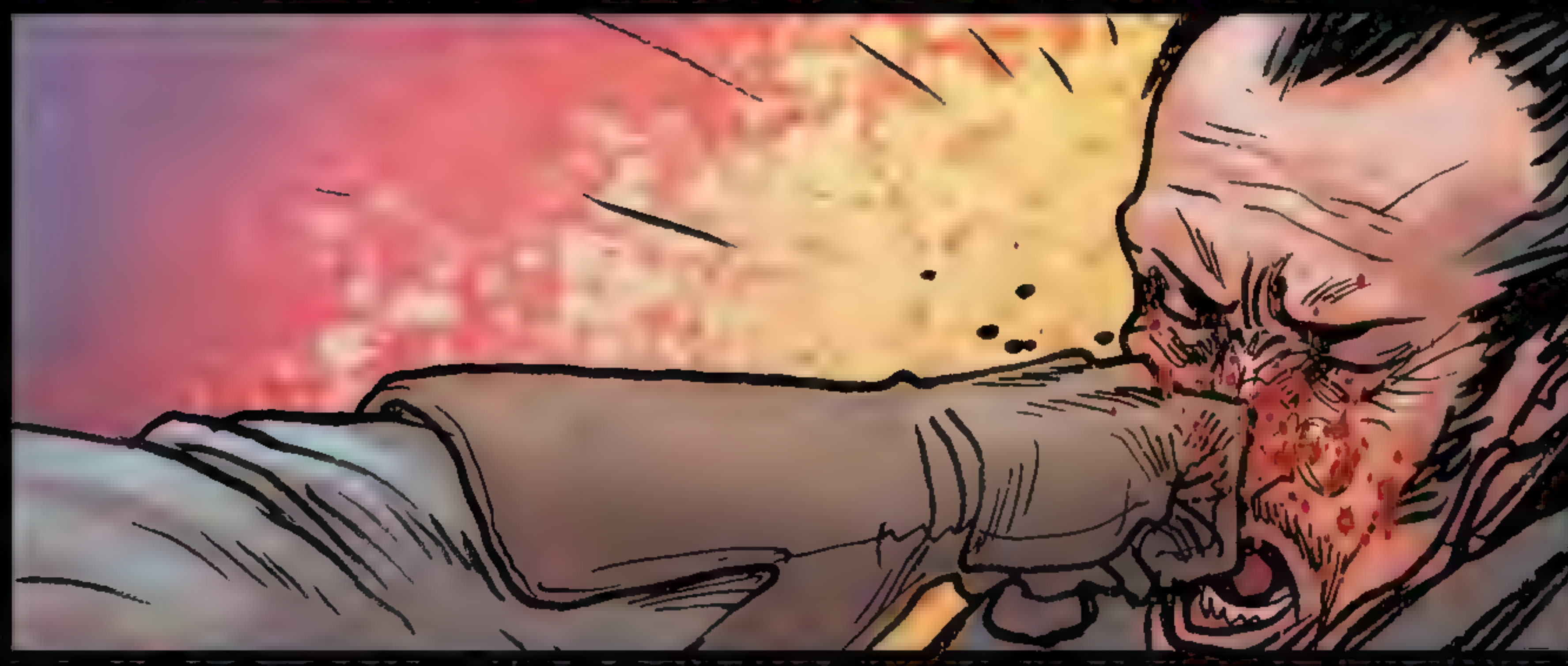


KEEP YER THOUGHTS
TA YERSELF FER A BIT.
AH'M GETTIN' A
HEADACHE.

FINE. ALTHOUGH
I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR
MORE ABOUT THIS
WIFE OF YOURS...



DOC...?

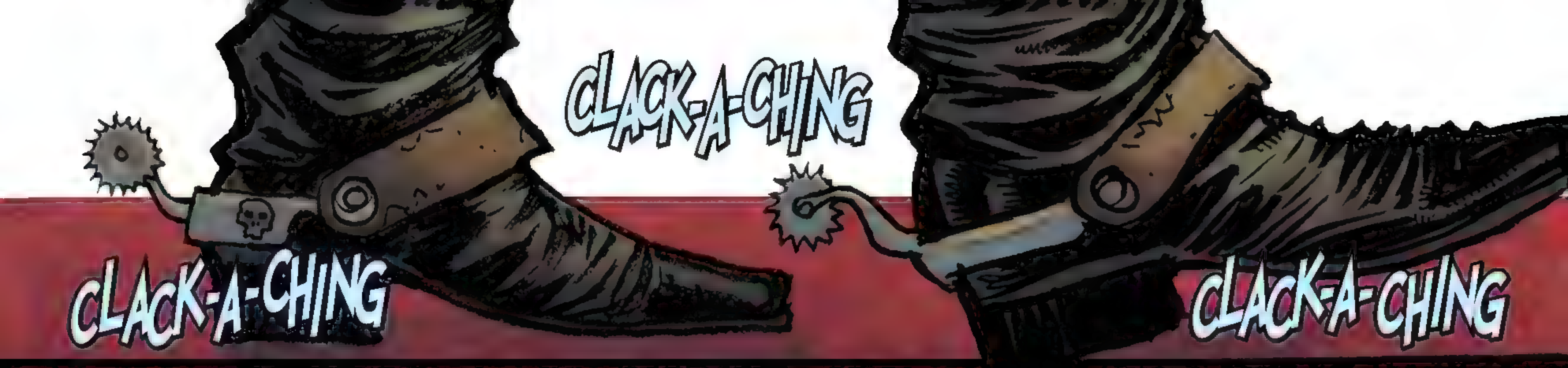


SAY WIFE
ONE MORE
TIME.

GOTHAM CITY.

THREE WEEKS LATER...





CLACK-A-CHING

CLACK-A-CHING

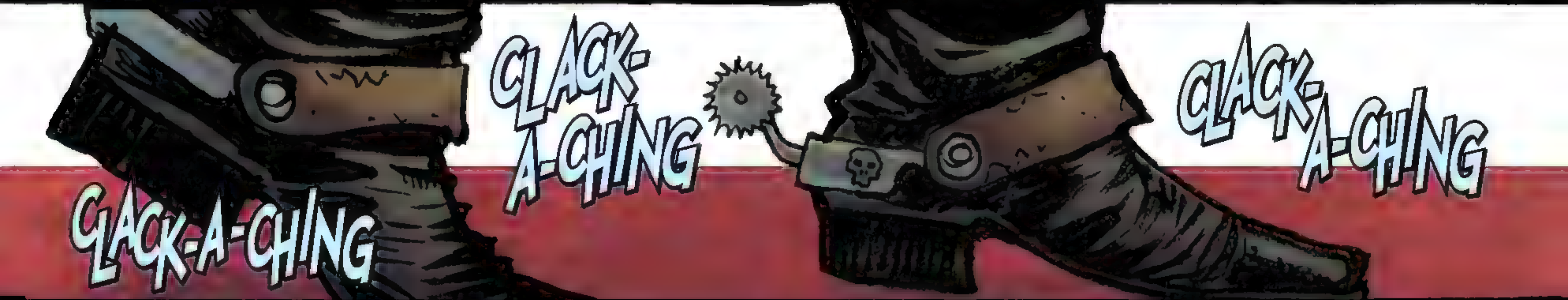
CLACK-A-CHING



GOTHAM IS A BURGEONING ECONOMY. THE HARBOR IS FILLED WITH BOATS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE... FILLED WITH PEOPLE LOOKING TO MAKE THEIR FORTUNES.

THOSE PEOPLE NEED HOMES AND BUSINESSES.

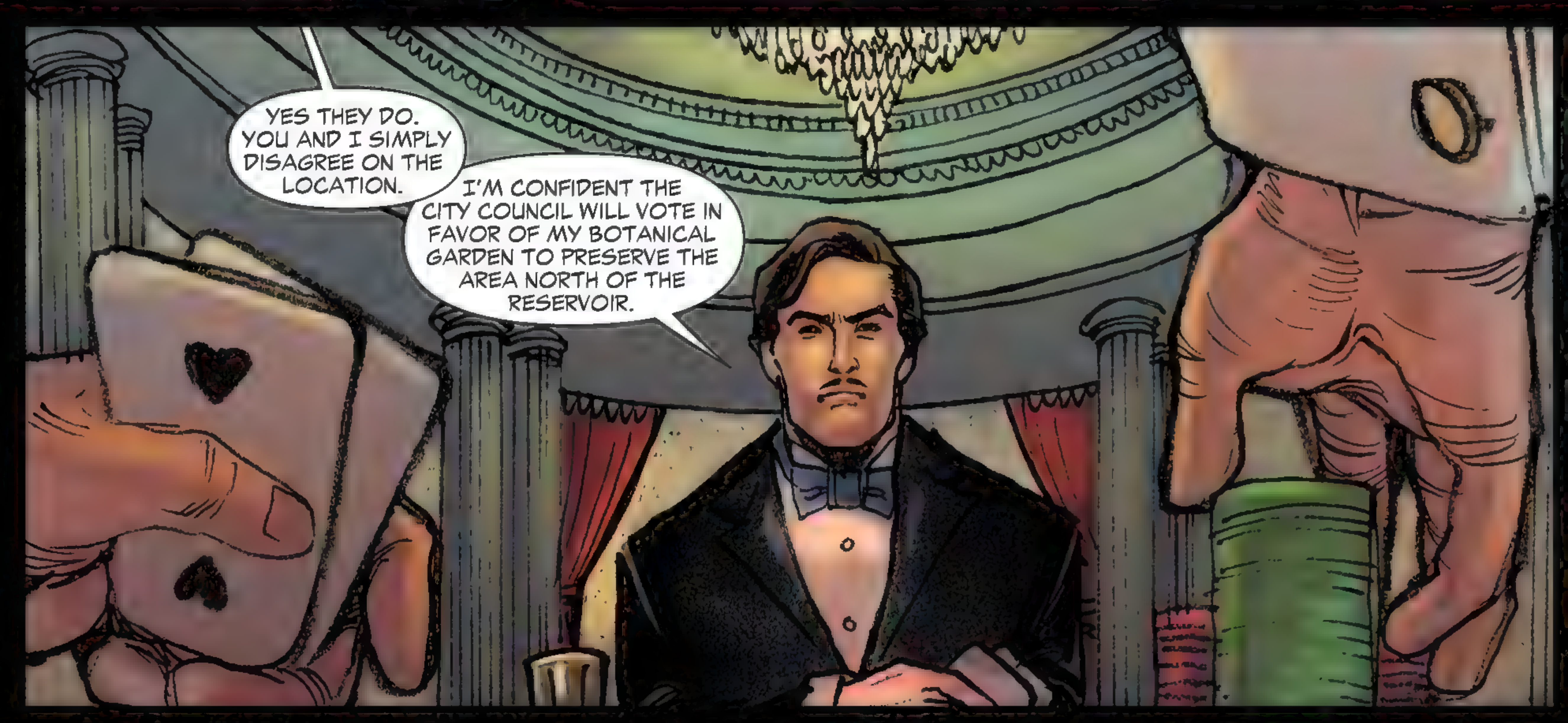
THEY ALSO NEED PARKS, AND PUBLIC SPACES.



CLACK-A-CHING

CLACK-A-CHING

CLACK-A-CHING



YES THEY DO. YOU AND I SIMPLY DISAGREE ON THE LOCATION.

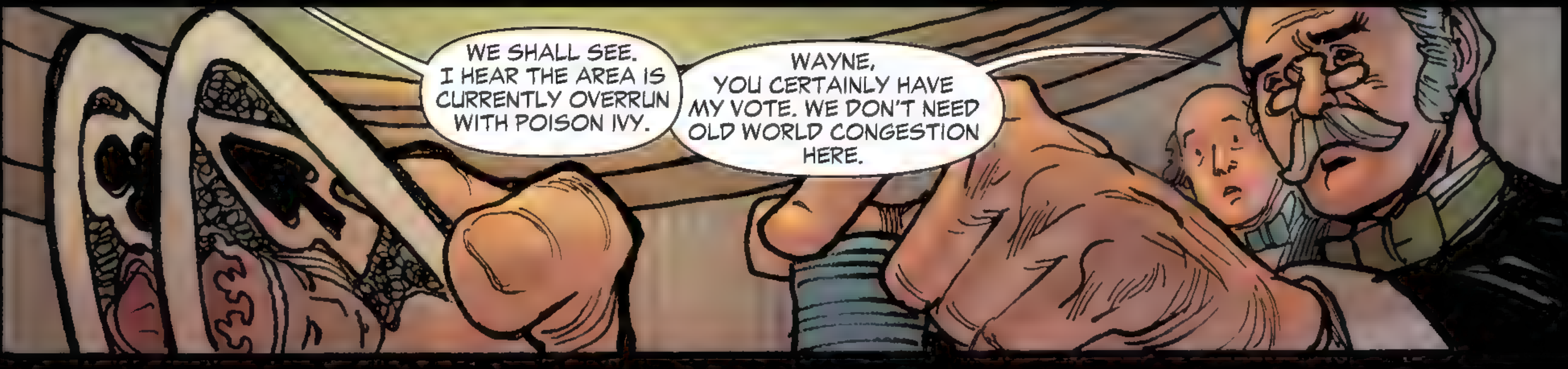
I'M CONFIDENT THE CITY COUNCIL WILL VOTE IN FAVOR OF MY BOTANICAL GARDEN TO PRESERVE THE AREA NORTH OF THE RESERVOIR.



CLACK-A-CHING

CLACK-A-CHING

CLACK-A-CHING



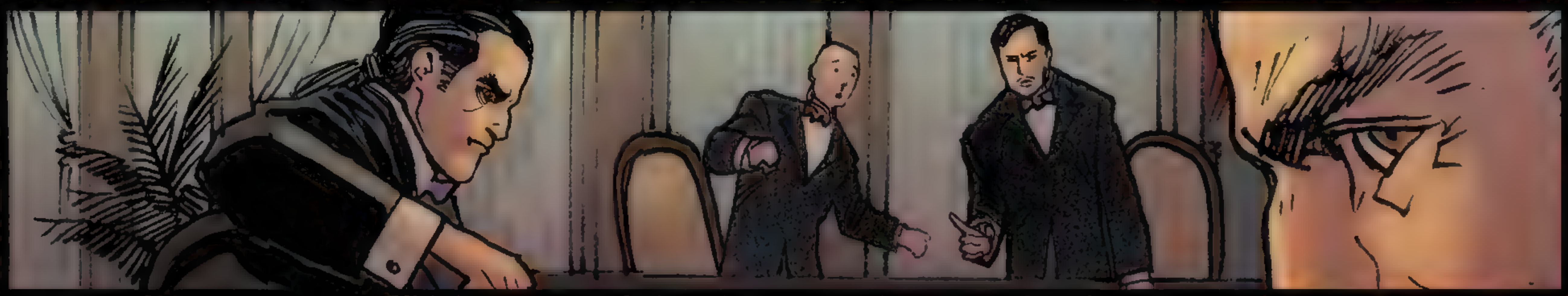
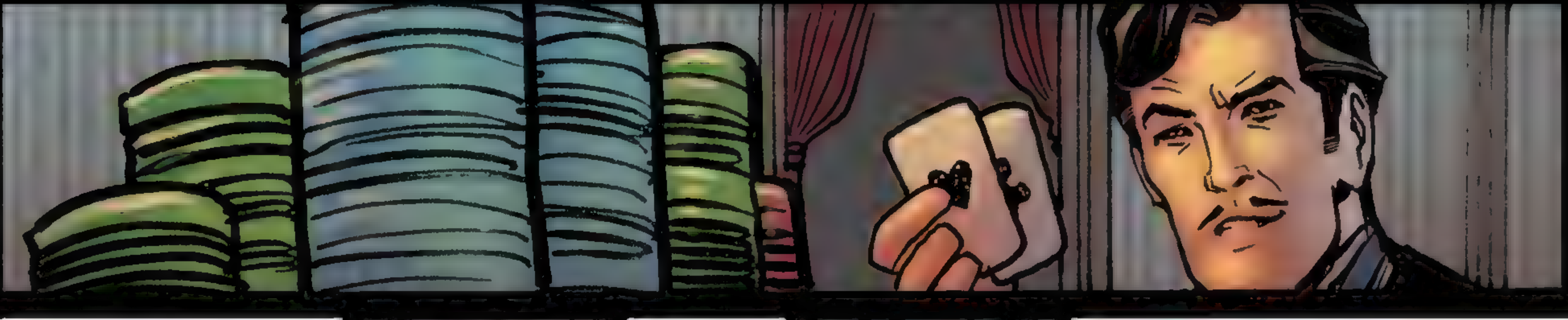
WE SHALL SEE.
I HEAR THE AREA IS
CURRENTLY OVERRUN
WITH POISON IVY.

WAYNE,
YOU CERTAINLY HAVE
MY VOTE. WE DON'T NEED
OLD WORLD CONGESTION
HERE.



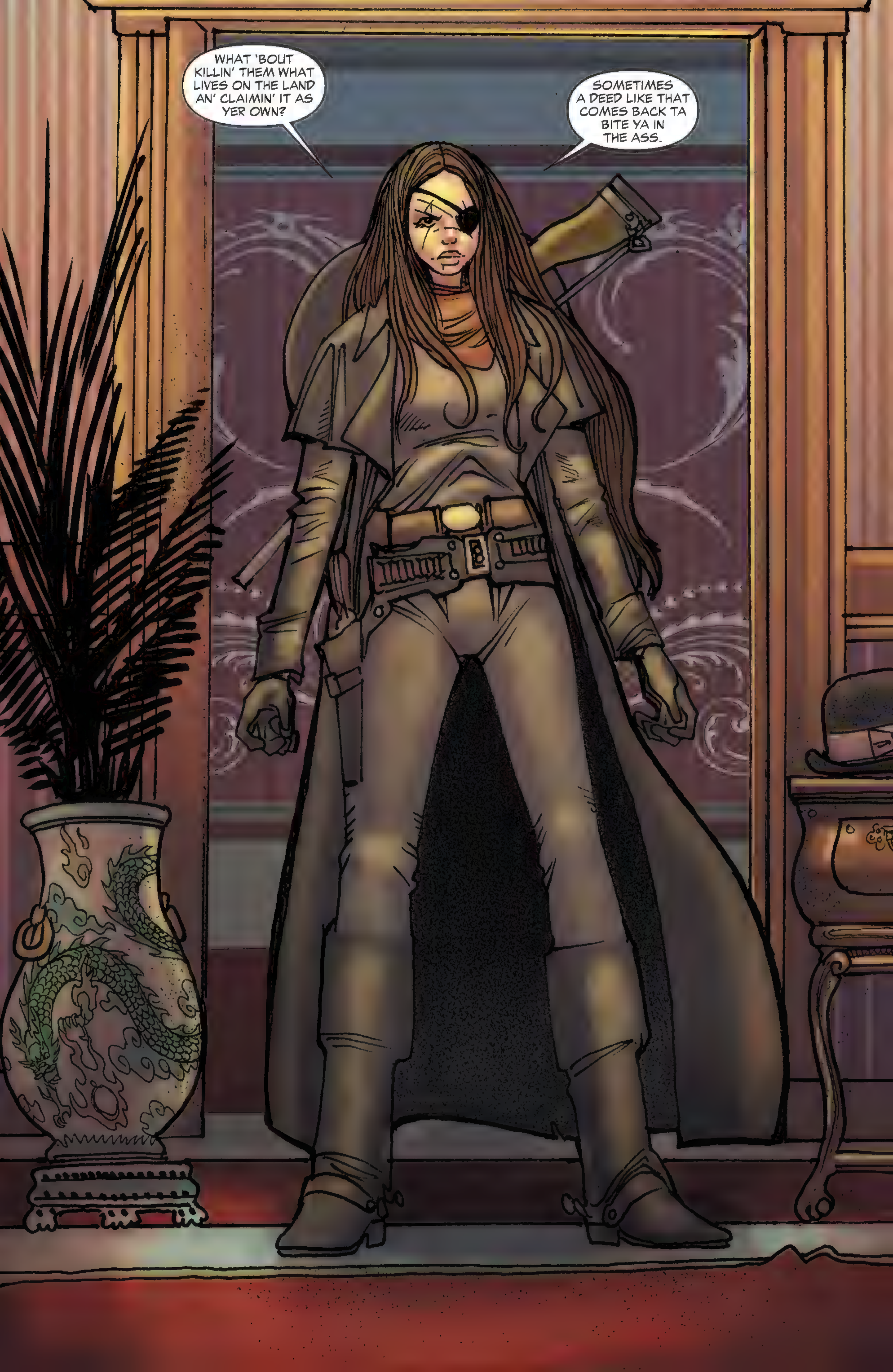
MY POINT EXACTLY.
CONTROL THE LAND AND
YOU CONTROL THOSE WHO
LIVE ON IT. OWN THE LAND
AND YOU OWN THOSE
WHO LIVE ON IT.

I HARDLY THINK
OWNERSHIP OF PEOPLE
SHOULD BE THE END
RESULT OF ANY FINANCIAL
ENDEAVOR.



WHAT 'BOUT
KILLIN' THEM WHAT
LIVES ON THE LAND
AN' CLAIMIN' IT AS
YER OWN?

SOMETIMES
A DEED LIKE THAT
COMES BACK TA
BITE YA IN
THE ASS.



I'M SORRY, MISS,
BUT THIS IS A PRIVATE
ROOM FOR MEN ONLY.
I'LL ASK THAT YOU
KINDLY LEAVE.

AH DON'T SEE
ANY MEN, JUST A
BUNCH A' DAISIES, AND
OILY MISCREANTS IN
FANCY SUITS.

WHO ARE
YOU?

NAME'S TALLULAH BLACK,
AN' YER THE NO-GOOD SLUMBITCH
WHAT TOOK MY FAMILY'S LAND,
AND DISPATCHED AGENTS TA
SOAK OUR BLOOD IN IT.

I HAVE NO IDEA
WHAT YOU'RE
TALKING ABOUT.

YOU SHOULD
LEAVE *IMMEDIATELY*
OR I SHALL HAVE
SECURITY THROW
YOU OUT.

DON'T WORRY,
AH'LL BE GONE IN
A SECOND.

DEAR
GOD!
SO YOU'RE
GOING TO SHOOT
ME IN COLD BLOOD
IN FRONT OF ALL
OF THESE
WITNESSES?

WAYNE
CASINO



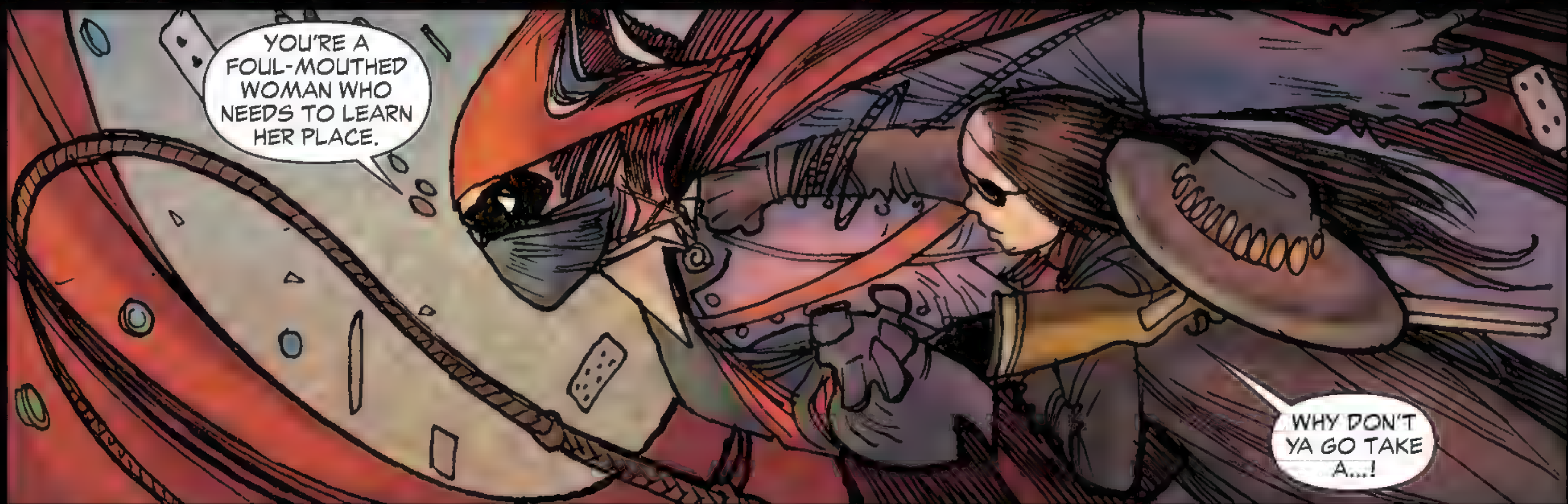
I THINK NOT.



MEET MY PERSONAL GUARD.

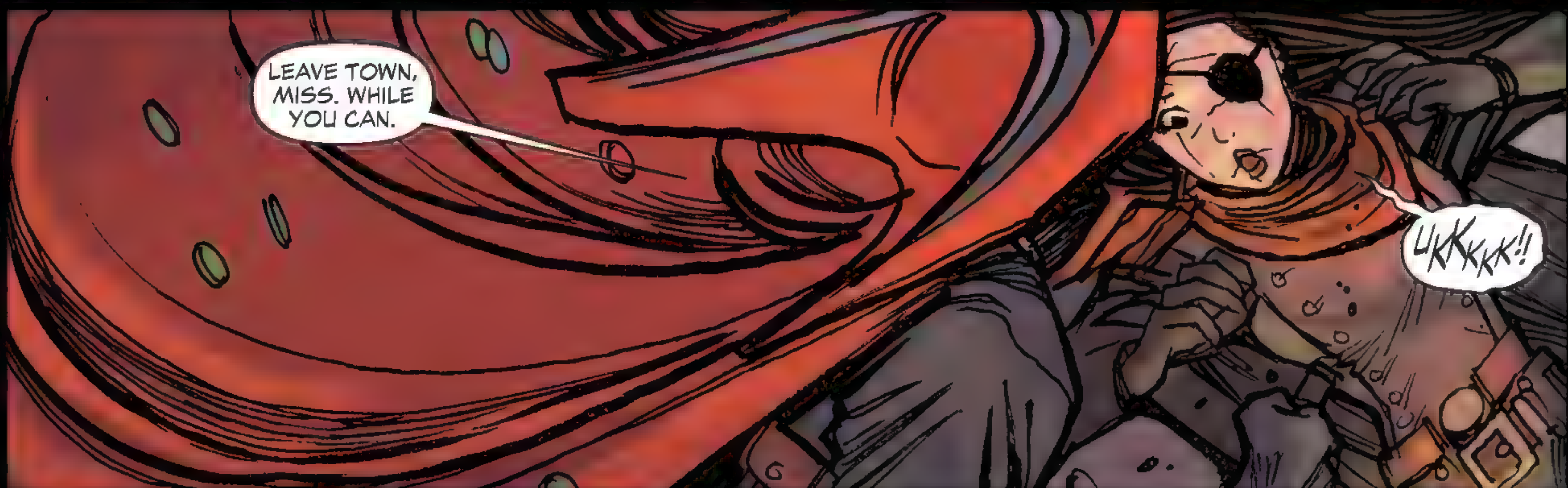


YA SHOULDA HIRED MORE THAN ONE MAN TA PROTECT YER LAND-POACHIN' ASS!



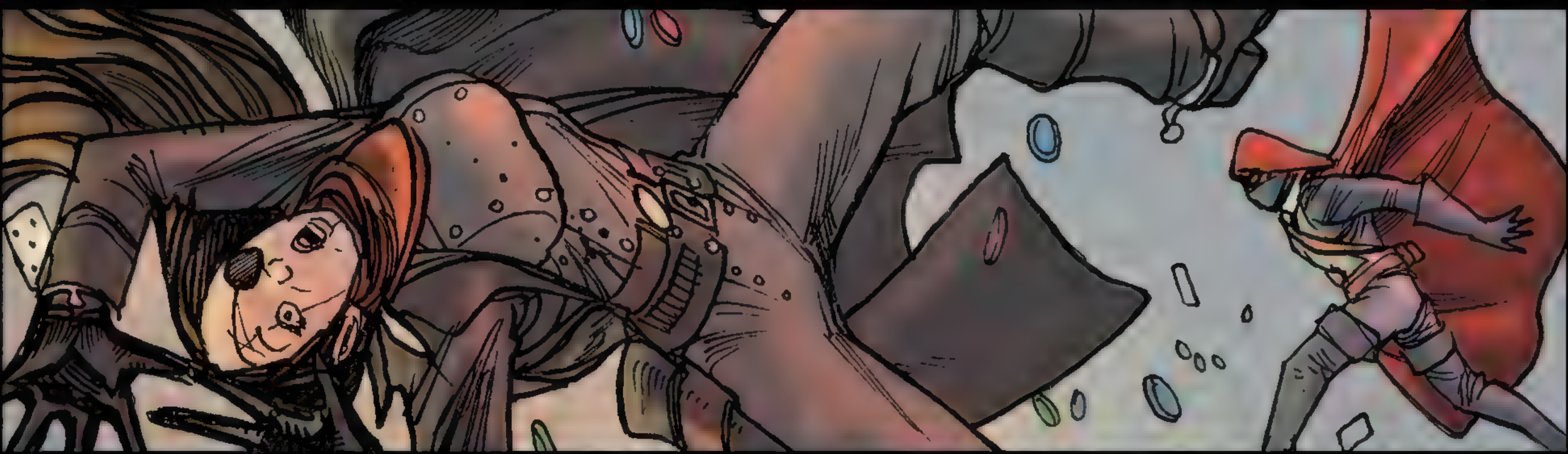
YOU'RE A FOUL-MOUTHED WOMAN WHO NEEDS TO LEARN HER PLACE.

WHY DON'T YA GO TAKE A...!



LEAVE TOWN, MISS. WHILE YOU CAN.

UKKKK!







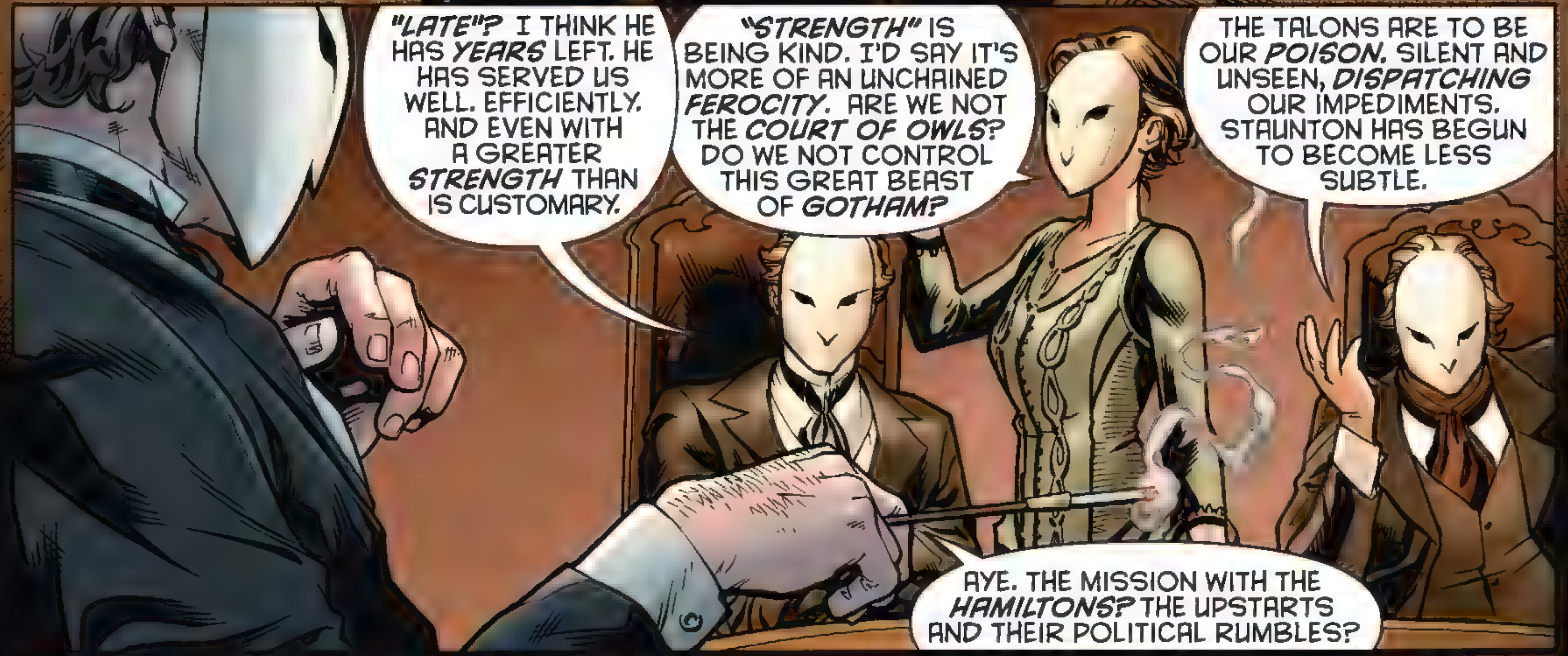
I SPEAK FOR THE MAJORITY WHEN I SAY THAT THE TIME OF **ALEXANDER STAUNTON** IS DRAWING DARK.

HIS SERVICE AS OUR **TALON** SHOULD END.

IS THIS **PREMATURE**?

WITH DUE RESPECT, I FEEL HIS DEPARTURE COMES ALL TOO **LATE**.

HEAR, HEAR!

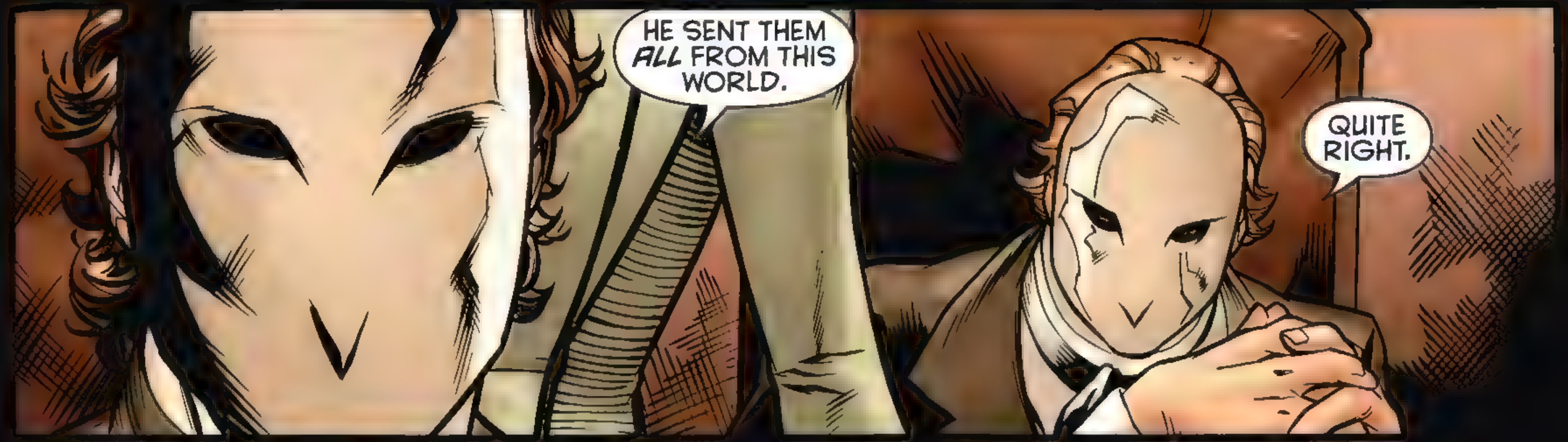


"**LATE**"? I THINK HE HAS **YEARS** LEFT. HE HAS SERVED US WELL. EFFICIENTLY. AND EVEN WITH A GREATER **STRENGTH** THAN IS CUSTOMARY.

"**STRENGTH**" IS BEING KIND. I'D SAY IT'S MORE OF AN UNCHAINED **FEROCITY**. ARE WE NOT THE **COURT OF OWLS**? DO WE NOT CONTROL THIS GREAT BEAST OF **GOTHAM**?

THE **TALONS** ARE TO BE OUR **POISON**. SILENT AND UNSEEN, **DISPATCHING** OUR IMPEDIMENTS. STAUNTON HAS BEGUN TO BECOME LESS **SUBTLE**.

AYE. THE MISSION WITH THE **HAMILTONS**? THE UPSTARTS AND THEIR POLITICAL RUMBLES?



HE SENT THEM **ALL** FROM THIS WORLD.

QUITE RIGHT.



"DISPATCHED WITH
ALL THE STEALTH OF
CANNON FIRE.

"IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING
THAT HE WAS FORCED TO KILL
A FAMILY NEXT DOOR WHO
OVERHEARD THE SCREAMS OF
THE SLAUGHTER.

"HE IS MORE
MONSTER THAN
WEAPON."

"I PUT IT TO YOU ALL THAT
WE RETIRE *ALEXANDER
STAUNTON* FROM HIS
SERVICE AS OUR *TALON*.

"AND AS IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN
WITH OUR SERVANTS WHO
CAME BEFORE HIM, THE DAY
MAY COME WHERE HE MAY AVAIL
THE COURT OF OWLS AGAIN."

NIGHT OF THE OWLS
YOU HAVE BEEN
JUDGED
UNWORTHY!

WRITTEN BY JUDD WINICK
PENCILS BY MARCUS TO
INKS BY RYAN WINN
COLORS BY BRIAN REBER
LETTERS BY DEZI SIENTY

"AT SUCH TIME WHEN A MISSION
AND A WORTHY ADVERSARY WILL BE
THRUST BEFORE HIM."

NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 4:30 PM... BATMAN, INC. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

BATWING HAS
CERTAINLY BEEN
TESTING THE LIMITS
OF THE ARMOR.

AND NOT JUST
THE WEAR AND TEAR
TO THE EXOSKELETON.
THE JET PACK'S CORE
HAS BEEN BURNED
THIN.

ARE YOU SURE
WE CAN'T TALK
BATWING INTO SOME
HEAVIER CASINGS? TO
BE BLUNT, I'D PREFER A
STRENGTH UPGRADE,
AS WELL. GIVE HIM
SOME MORE
BANG FOR OUR
BUCK.

HE WAS *QUITE* CLEAR, LUCIUS.
THICKER ARMOR OR
STRENGTH ENHANCEMENTS
WILL *GREATLY* IMPEDE HIS
MANEUVERABILITY.

HE'S NOT
INTERESTED IN
PILOTING A *ROBOT*,
MR. FOX. IT'S *ARMOR*
THAT HE WEARS. NOT
A VESSEL TO
TRAVEL IN.

WELL, MR. BA, MR. ZAVIMBE, YOU
TWO WOULD KNOW BEST. I'M NO
STRANGER TO ANSWERING TO
THE VERY PARTICULAR NEEDS OF
A *BATMAN, INCORPORATED*
MEMBER.

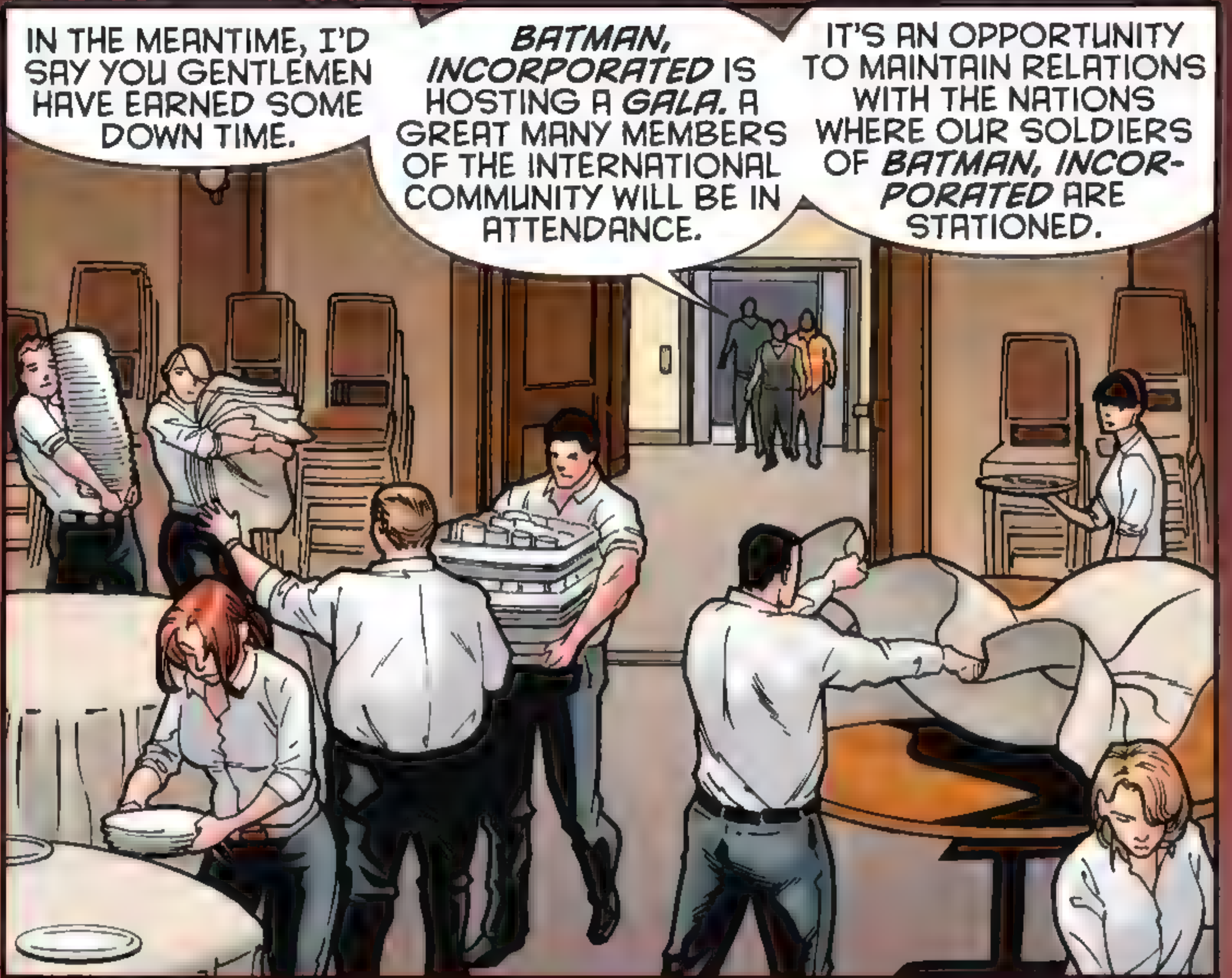
OUR JOB
MOST TIMES
IS TO BEST
PREPARE THEM
FOR *ANYTHING*.



WHICH IS WHY WE WERE JUST SEEKING THE *AQUATIC* UPGRADES.

AH YES. I SAW THE INTEL REPORT ON THE UPTICK IN *SOMALI PIRATE* ACTIVITY. I CAN ASSUME BATWING WILL BE SPENDING SOME TIME ON THE *HIGH SEAS*?

WE CAN MAKE THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS. IT SHOULD TAKE TWO DAYS FOR THE UPGRADES AND A DIAGNOSTIC STUDY.



IN THE MEANTIME, I'D SAY YOU GENTLEMEN HAVE EARNED SOME DOWN TIME.

BATMAN, INCORPORATED IS HOSTING A *GALA*. A GREAT MANY MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE.

IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAINTAIN RELATIONS WITH THE NATIONS WHERE OUR SOLDIERS OF *BATMAN, INCORPORATED* ARE STATIONED.



WOULD YOU JOIN US? HAVING TWO MEMBERS OF TEAM *BATWING* ON HAND COULD AID IN FURTHERING DIPLOMACY.

AND THE FOOD'S ALWAYS PHENOMENAL.



THAT IS QUITE GENEROUS, MR. FOX, BUT WE DON'T--

WE WOULD CONSIDER IT AN HONOR TO ATTEND. I AGREE...

"...WE COULD CERTAINLY USE SOME DOWN TIME."

GOTHAM UPPER EAST SIDE...



YOU HAVE TRAVELED SO FAR, FROM THE BANKS OF THE *RIVER LETHE*, THE RIVER OF MINDLESSNESS, WHERE THE SHADES WALK, BACK TO THIS WORLD, TO YOUR CITY. *GOTHAM*.

YES, LOOK...LOOK AT YOUR BODY. IT HAS BEEN RESTORED, AND MADE STRONGER THAN BEFORE. *MUCH STRONGER*.



AND WE ARE STRONGER, TOO. YOUR COURT. WE HAVE BEEN GATHERING OUR RESOURCES, OUR POWER, AND WAITING AS THE GREAT OWL WAITS--*IN PLAIN SIGHT*. UNTIL NOW...FOR NOW IT IS TIME FOR US TO STRIKE...TO *RECLAIM* THIS CITY...

FOR TONIGHT WE WILL NOT ONLY KILL OUR ENEMY, BUT WE WILL TAKE BACK OUR CITY!



WE WILL TAKE BACK OUR KINGDOM!

NOW GO! GO AND TAKE GOTHAM CITY!

"DAVID, TRY NOT TO LOOK SO DISGUSTED."

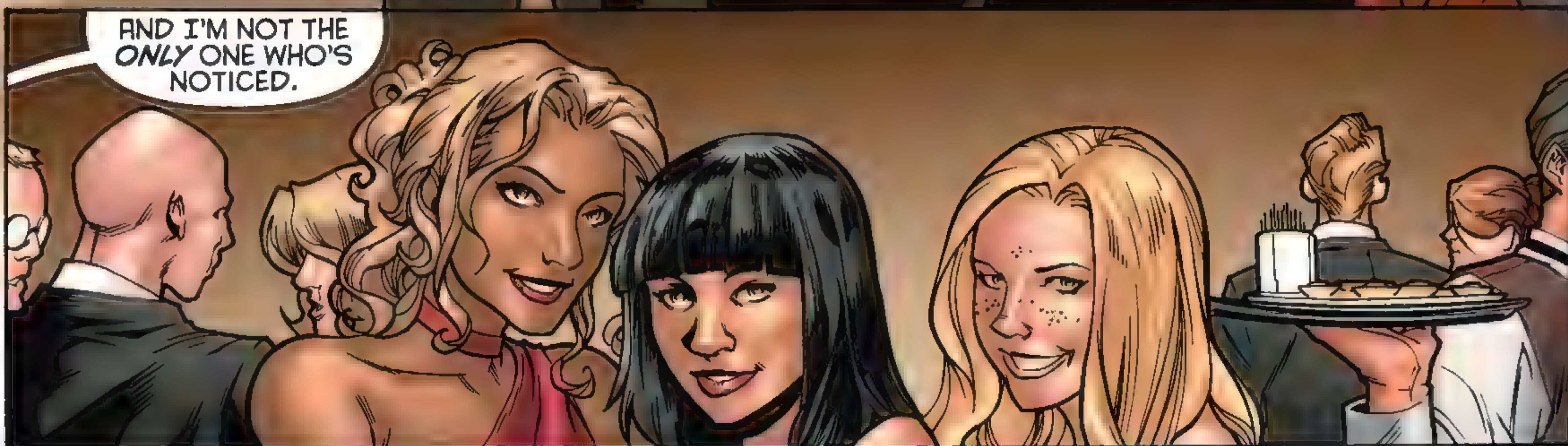


I'M SORRY, MATU. I WAS NOT RAISED **SURROUNDED** BY OPULENCE THE WAY YOU WERE.



THIS DISPLAY OF **GRANDEUR** MAKES ME... UNCOMFORTABLE.

BUT YOU LOOK SO GOOD IN A SUIT.



AND I'M NOT THE **ONLY** ONE WHO'S NOTICED.



I'M NOT HERE TO ROMANCE WOMEN.

GOD, DAVID, YOU SOUND LIKE YOU ARE **EIGHTY YEARS** OLD. AFTER ALL YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH, I'D SAY YOU'VE EARNED AN EVENING OUT. AND I WASN'T THINKING ABOUT "**ROMANCE.**"



MATU BA?
YES?

MATTHEW KALU. IT IS GOOD TO HAVE FELLOW AFRICANS AMONG US.



OH--IT IS A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, *PRIME MINISTER*.

PLEASE, WE ARE COUNTRYMEN, TITLES ARE NOTHING. AND I AM NOT A *STRANGER*. I KNOW YOUR FATHER. IT'S BEEN YEARS, BUT HOW--



I APOLOGIZE FOR THE INTERRUPTION, *PRIME MINISTER*, BUT THE *RUSSIAN ATTACHE* HAS JUST ARRIVED. I KNOW THAT YOU--

YES. BUSINESS! I WILL FIND YOU GOOD GENTLEMEN LATER.



THANK YOU FOR THE "SAVE," MR. FOX.

SO MY ASSUMPTION WAS CORRECT?

THANK GOD I DIDN'T HAVE TO SHAKE HIS HAND.



DAVID.

PLEASE. "PRIME MINISTER"? HE'S A MEGALOMANIAC WHO SHOULD BE ROTTING IN A CONCRETE BUNKER. HE WAS PRACTICALLY A WARLORD.

I KNOW. AND DON'T THINK IT DOESN'T *SICKEN* ME. BUT THE *UNITED STATES* HAS BACKED HIM, AND HE HAS STABILIZED THE REGION.



COMPROMISES MUST BE MADE FOR THE GREATER GOOD.

"AND WE MUST DO
EVERYTHING WE
CAN TO FIND THE
BENEFITS."



I SMELL
SMOKE.

PERHAPS
A FIRE IN THE
KITCHEN?

ONLY
IF THEY
ARE USING
GASOLINE.

DAMN IT!

I'LL HELP
SECURITY CLEAR
THE ROOM!

DO
THAT!

I'LL BE IN
BACK!

I can really smell the gas now. If this is arson, they weren't trying to conceal their--

Intent.

Damn. Not arson.

It was a distraction.

And I am unarmed.

I can only hope that my retina and voice scan still grant me access.

Batwing is needed.

"TO ALL THE ALLIES OF THE BAT PRESENTLY IN GOTHAM... I SEND THIS WITH THE GREATEST URGENCY."

TONIGHT, THE COURT OF OWLS HAS SENT THEIR ASSASSINS TO KILL NEARLY FORTY PEOPLE ACROSS THE CITY. THE COURT'S TARGETS ARE ALL GOTHAM LEADERS. PEOPLE WHO SHAPE THIS CITY.

DEAR GOD.

I HAVE UPLOADED A LIST OF THE TARGETS' NAMES, HERE. THE COURT'S ASSASSINS, THE "TALONS," ARE ALREADY EN ROUTE TO THEIR TARGETS.

THEY ARE HIGHLY TRAINED KILLERS WITH EXTRAORDINARY REGENERATIVE ABILITIES. FOR MANY OF THEIR TARGETS, I FEAR IT MAY BE TOO LATE--

BANG BANG

I WILL
KEEP THE--

BANG BANG

--KEEP THE LINE
TO THE CAVE OPEN AS
LONG AS I CAN
MANAGE.

BANG BANG

"GOOD LUCK
TO YOU...GOD
HELP US ALL."

I CAN GET OUT
ON MY OWN, DAMN IT!
AND THE DANGER IS
MINIMAL! THE BUILDING
IS A **FORTRESS!**
SPRINKLERS WILL
ACTIVATE IN LESS
THAN--

WE'RE JUST
FOLLOWING
PROTOCOL,
MR. FOX!

YOUR SAFETY IS OUR
JOB! **PLEASE,** STOP
STRUGGLING OR WE'LL
BE FORCED TO **DRAG**
YOU FROM THE--

SHINK



LUCIUS FOX.
YOU HAVE
BEEN JUDGED
UNWORTHY.



AS SUCH,
THE COURT
OF OWLS...

He's
quick.



And wears
armor.

...HAS
SENTENCED
YOU TO
DIE.

I assume our
similarities end there.



STAND
DOWN.

BATWING

I AM HERE,
MATU.

AND I AM
BUSY. SOMEONE
IS TRYING TO
MURDER
FOX.

HE IS A KILLER
CALLED A TALON! HE
IS ONE OF MANY THAT
ARE ATTACKING ALL
THROUGHOUT
GOTHAM!

UNFORTUNATELY, I WILL
HAVE TO LIMIT MY
ATTENTION TO
THIS ONE.

LISTEN TO
ME--HE IS
MORE THAN
A MAN!



THEN I
WILL END IT
QUICKLY.

After Massacre, I
made sure the suit
always had the
capability to bring
down a rhino.



Armor-piercing tranquilizer
darts seemed to be a safe wager.

TUNK

TUNK

TUNK

TUNK

TUNK



RUN, MR.
FOX. LEAVE
HIM TO ME.

HE IS DOWN,
MATU. SEE
TO FOX. I'M
SENDING--

EXIT

NO! DAVID,
GIVE HIM NO
QUARTER! HE
CAN--

--REGENERATE.

I couldn't hear Matu after that. The sound of
his blades raking across my armor was deafening.



ACACAC



SCRACK

SCRACK

SCRACK

SCRACK

SCRACK

But this animal just
burned through enough
drugs to incapacitate five
men. I can only guess at
the limits of his resilience.



So, I will have to test a few theories.



WACK

Question asked--



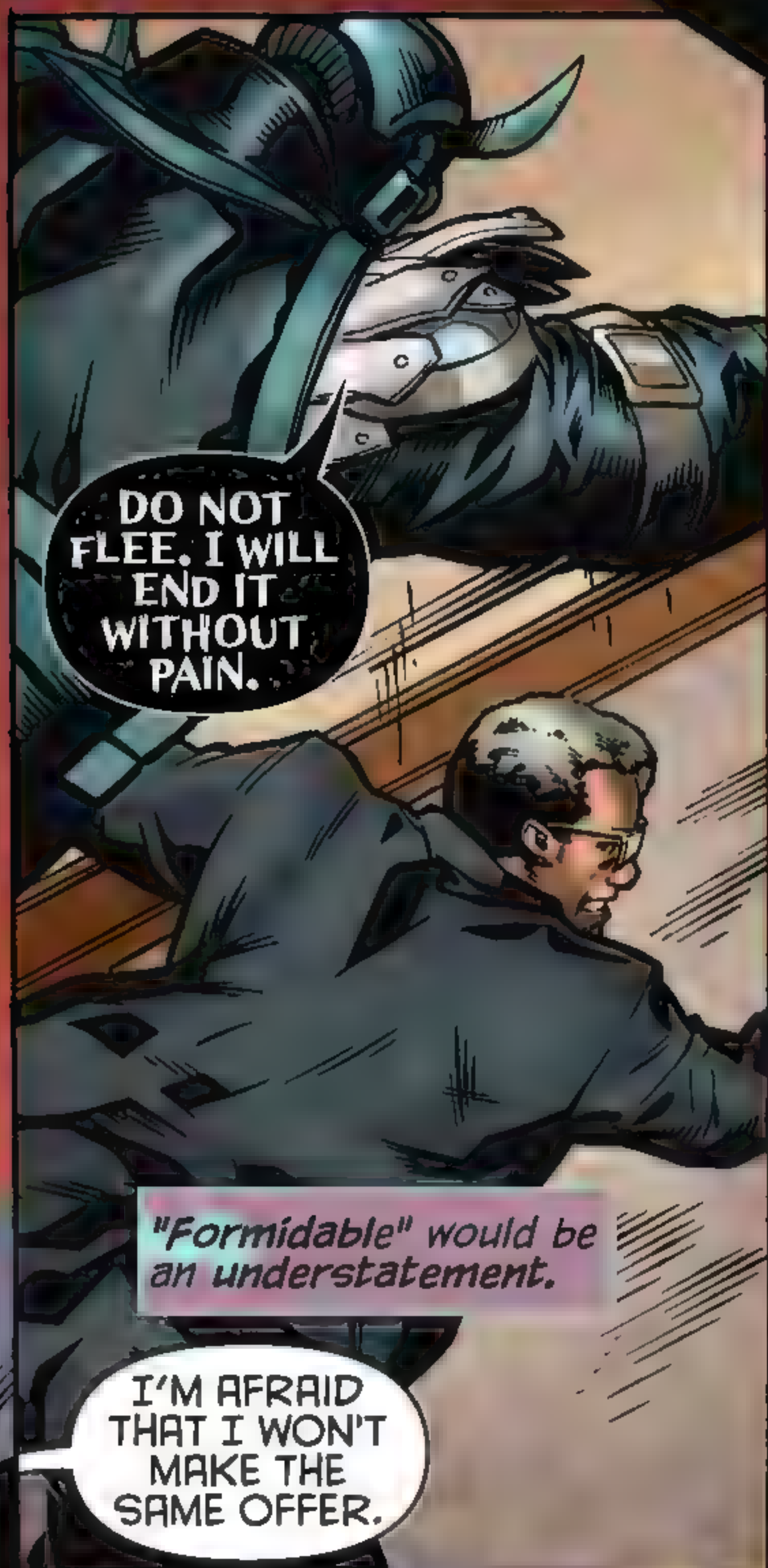
--and answered.

CRA-POP



Bone breaks reset. Cuts heal.

And he moves like Nightwing.



DO NOT
FLEE. I WILL
END IT
WITHOUT
PAIN.

"Formidable" would be
an understatement.

I'M AFRAID
THAT I WON'T
MAKE THE
SAME OFFER.



THIS WILL
HURT.



I can feel his back
break against that
car--and reset--
in milliseconds.

His healing metabolism
seems to be in lock
step with his adrenaline.

That means I
have no time.

He's becoming
more dangerous.

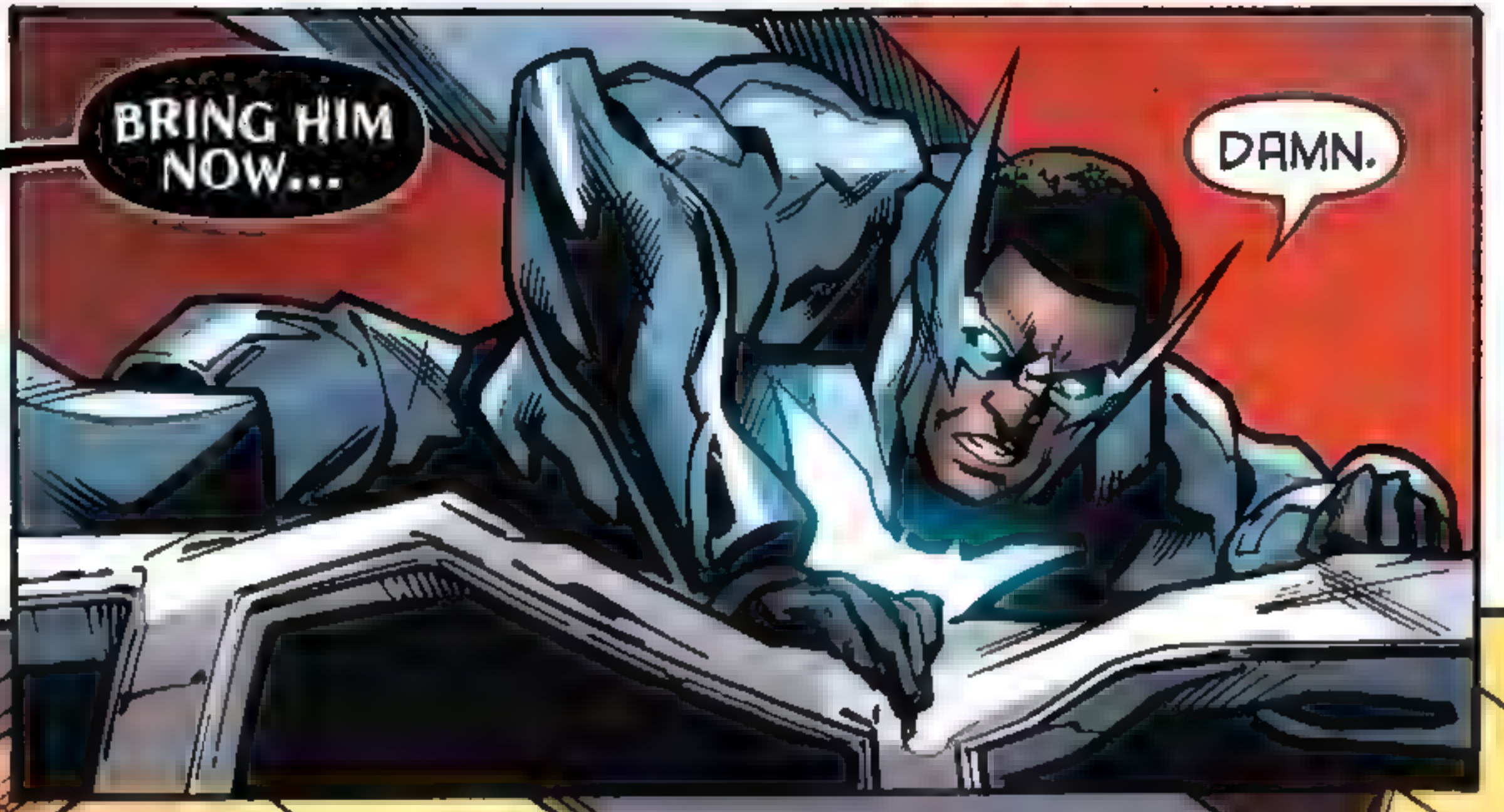
And Matu is
shouting "advice"
in my ears.



--HE CAN BE
BROUGHT DOWN
THROUGH COLD--
FREEZING HIM! OR
MASSIVE TISSUE
LOSS--!



BRING ME
LUCIUS FOX!
OR THIS ONE
DIES!



BRING HIM
NOW...

DAMN.



Ambassador
Vanul.

...OR I
WILL TAKE
THIS ONE'S
HEAD!

How ironic. A man who's brought
about so many decapitations
that he could make a **guillotine**
weep with jealousy now finds
his head on the block.



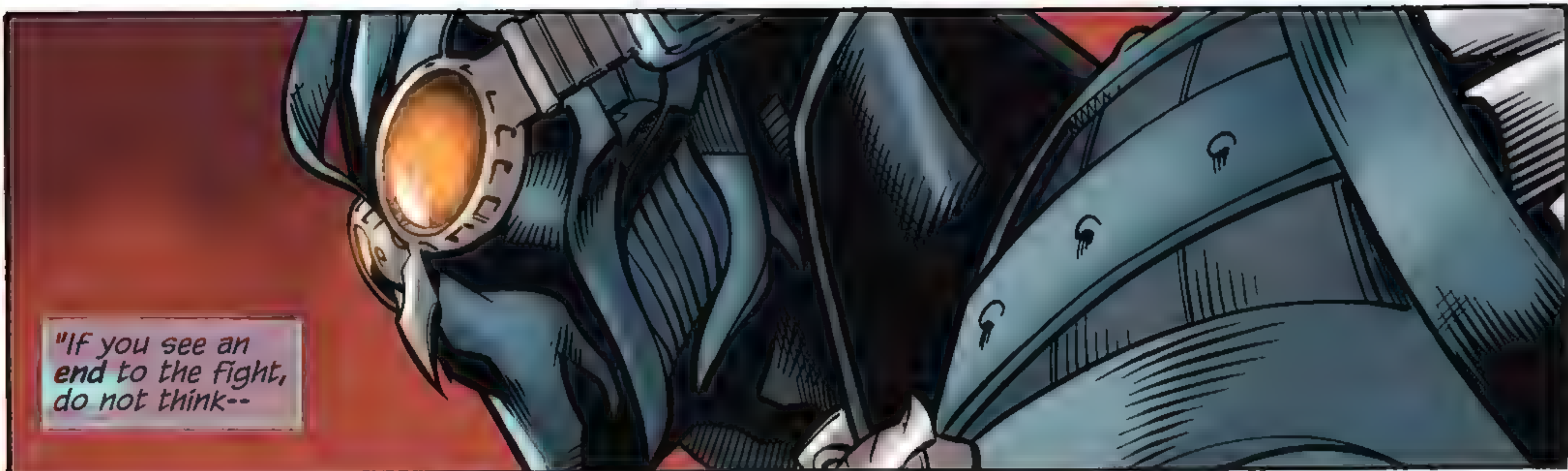
HERE!
LET HIM GO!
THERE'S NO
NEED TO--

And a brave man
comes to his rescue.



I have no time to
weigh the options.

It is as
Batman
has said.



And his bleeding has already ceased. Hopefully he won't regain consciousness or, God help us, grow his arms back--before I can get him into liquid nitrogen back in Batman's armory.

BATWING!
MY SAVIOR! MY
HEART SWELLS
WITH GRATITUDE!
THANK YOU, MY
BROTHER!

TO BE SO FAR FROM OUR
HOMELAND, AND HAVE THE
HERO WHO SHARES THE
BLOOD OF MY KINSMEN
COME TO MY
RESCUE!

I
TAKE PRIDE
THAT YOU WOULD
LEAP TO PROTECT
AN OLD WARRIOR.
YOU--MY PROUD
AFRICAN
SON!

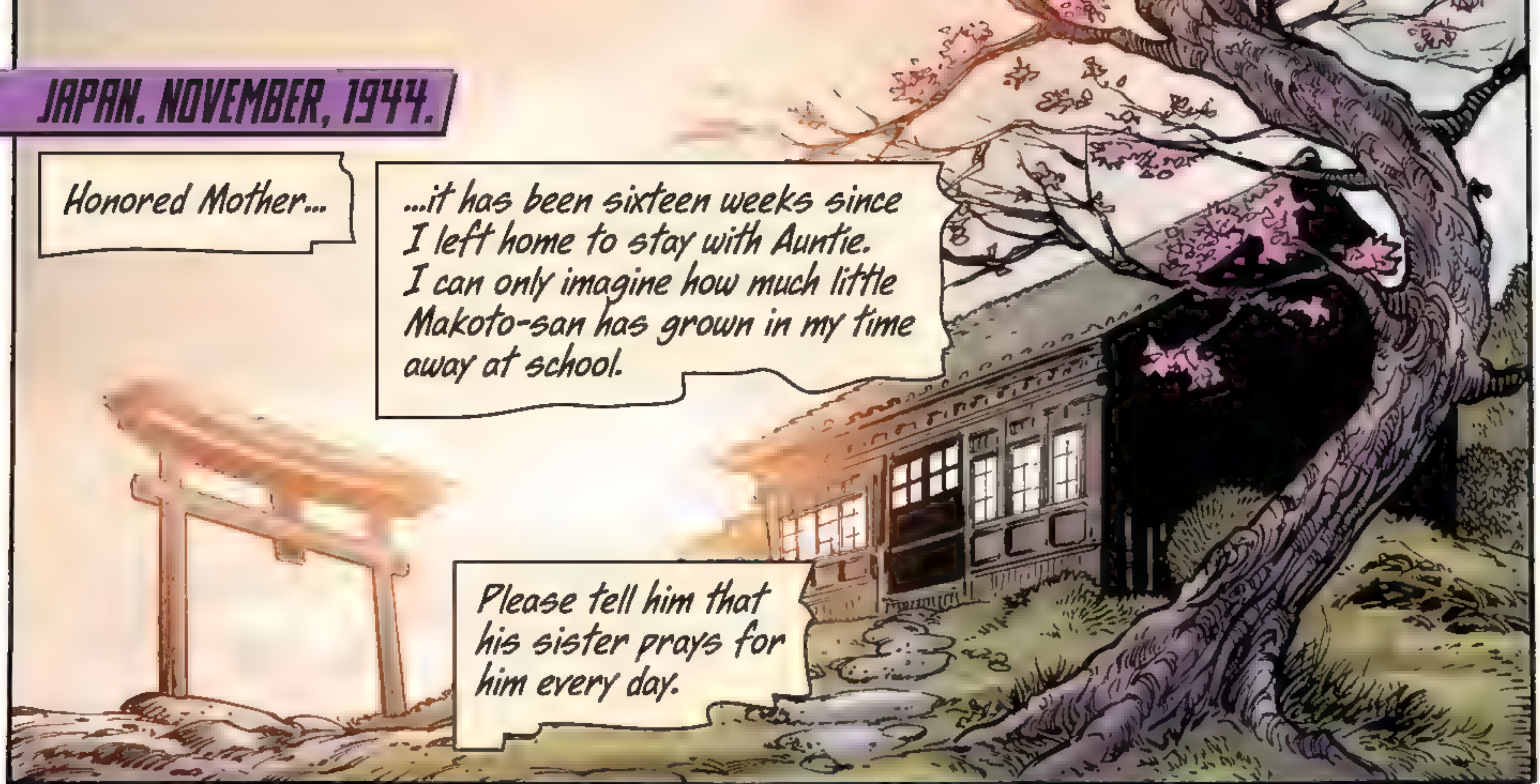
CRACK

FORGIVE ME,
MR. FOX.

BUT *THAT*
IS HOW WE
COMPROMISE
IN AFRICA.







Honored Mother...

...it has been sixteen weeks since I left home to stay with Auntie. I can only imagine how much little Makoto-san has grown in my time away at school.

Please tell him that his sister prays for him every day.

I also pray for Father and his swift victory in China.

I miss you all and hope that you do not forget your Ayumi, and will recognize me when I return to our farm.

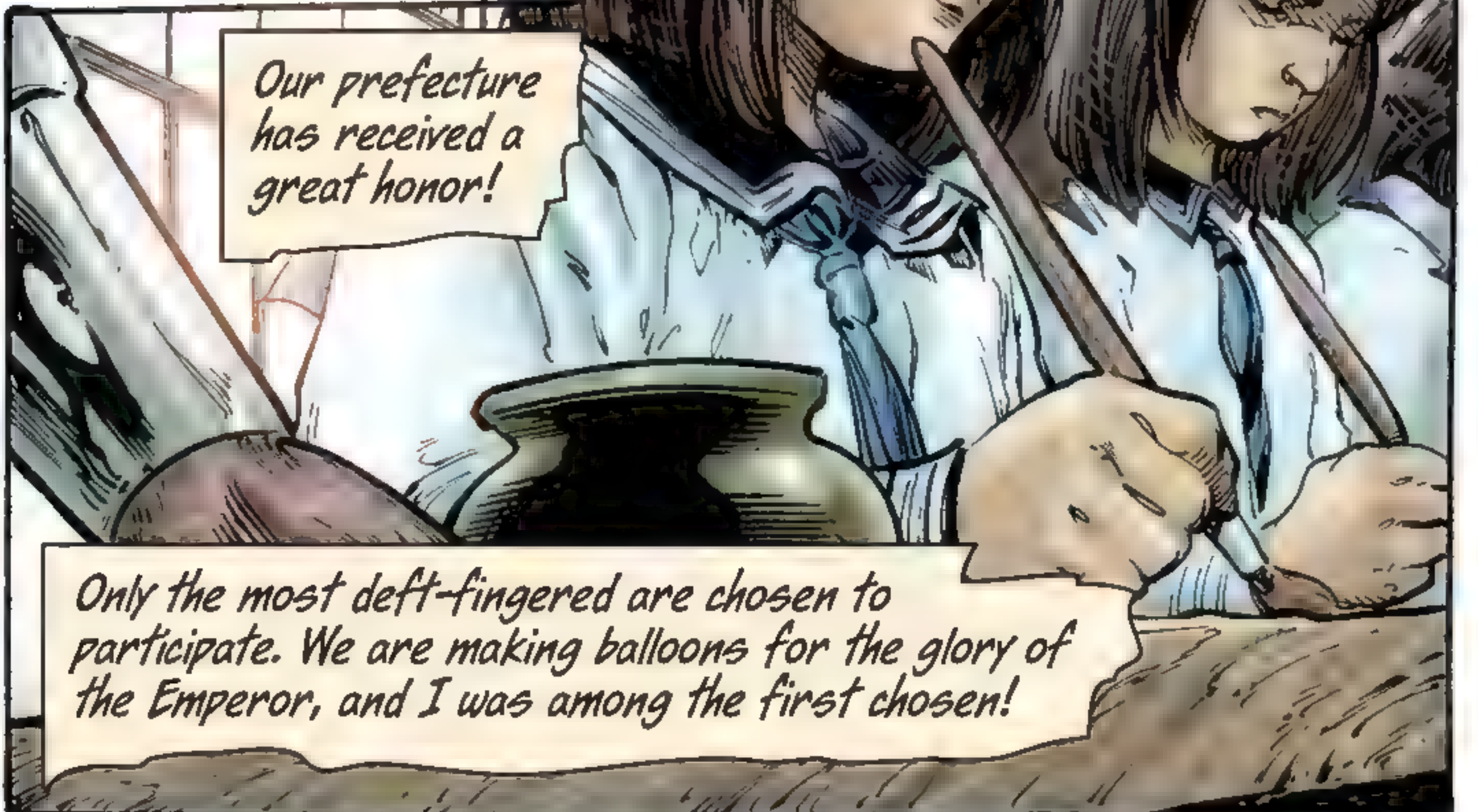


I do not think I will be allowed to send this letter.

But it is a comfort to write to my family nonetheless.



Our prefecture has received a great honor!



Only the most deft-fingered are chosen to participate. We are making balloons for the glory of the Emperor, and I was among the first chosen!

The washi paper smells like Father's own garden.

Some of the girls are so hungry that they have taken to eating the konnyaku paste.

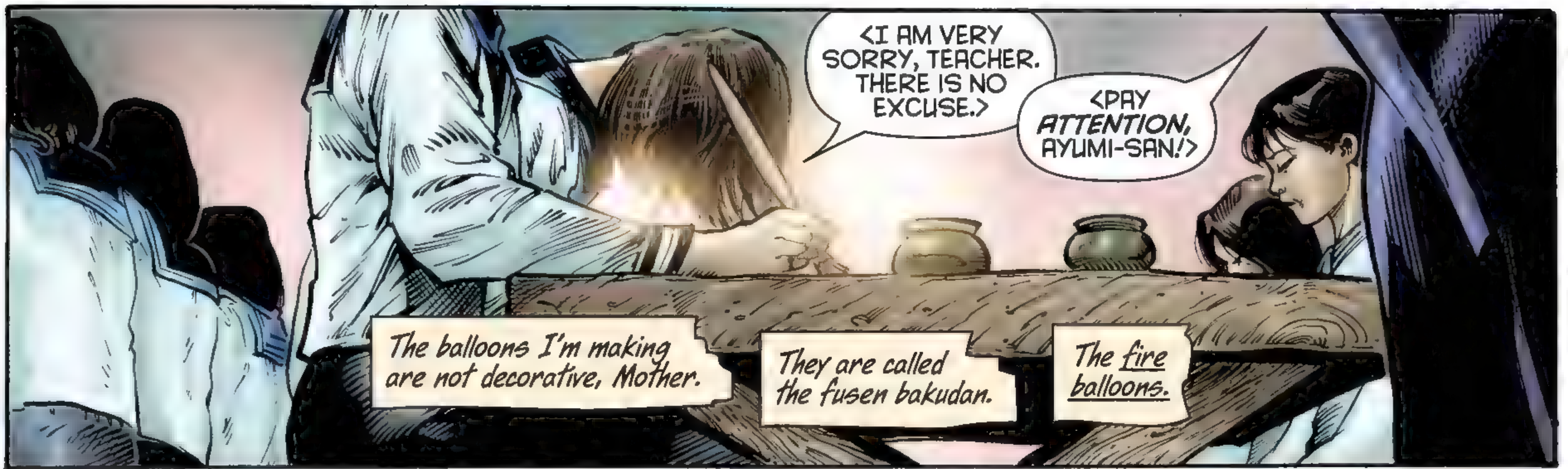
I am ashamed for them.



<YOU USE TOO MUCH PASTE, LITTLE FOOL!>

<GENERAL KUSABA IS HERE TODAY...DO YOU WANT HIM TO THINK OUR SCHOOL WASTES OUR PRECIOUS RESOURCES?>

A great man has come to inspect us. I must be perfect for him.



<I AM VERY SORRY, TEACHER. THERE IS NO EXCUSE.>

<PAY ATTENTION, AYUMI-SAN!>

The balloons I'm making are not decorative, Mother.

They are called the fusen bakudan.

The fire balloons.

They will be the divine fingers of our country.

In the evenings, we assemble our finished pieces in the local sumo hall.

As a reward, we are allowed one night each week to watch the testing of the Fu-Go.

They are each indescribably glorious, Mother.

And we have made thousands.

Each Fu-Go will cross the ocean. What chance do our enemies have when our Emperor is so clever?

And each carries a bomb.



We weren't supposed to, but we signed our names to each in small letters. It was pride.



We could not help it.

They were so beautiful.



I miss you all. I miss being home.

But I will see you soon, when this hardship is over and we can return in joy.

Your daughter, Ayumi

November 13, 1944.

"LOOK, I KNOW YOU WORK FOR THE COURT OF OWLS, BUT YOU CAN'T JUST--"

I WONDER HOW THAT SENTENCE WILL END, MR. HALY.

WHAT IS IT EXACTLY THAT YOU BELIEVE THE COURT CANNOT DO?

TO BE HONEST, I CAN'T THINK OF A SINGLE THING.

MISTER, SHE'S THE BEST KINKER I'VE EVER SEEN. BEST I'VE HEARD OF. NAME'S MARY.

THIS IS YOUR BEST AERIALIST?

WHY IS SHE DRESSED LIKE A FARMHAND, MR. HALY?

I'D SEND HER UP IF I COULD. BUT I CAN'T. SHE...

...SHE SCARES THE RUBES, TO BE HONEST.

I GOT 'ER DOIN' BACKYARD WORK FOR THE PUNK PUSHER.

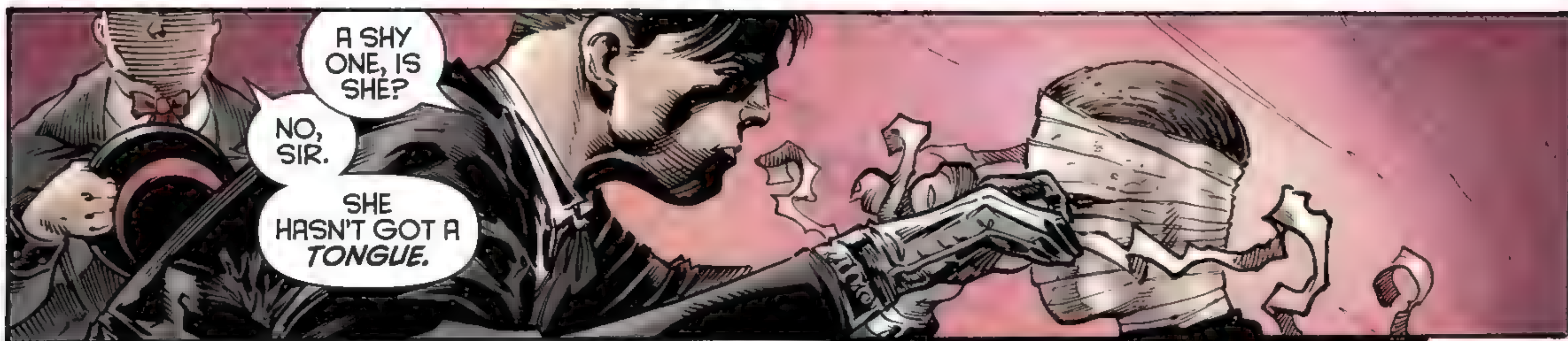
I...
...I'LL TAKE YOU TO HER.

MARY.

I'M GOING TO REMOVE THE WRAPPING FROM YOUR FACE, CHILD.

IS THAT ALL RIGHT?

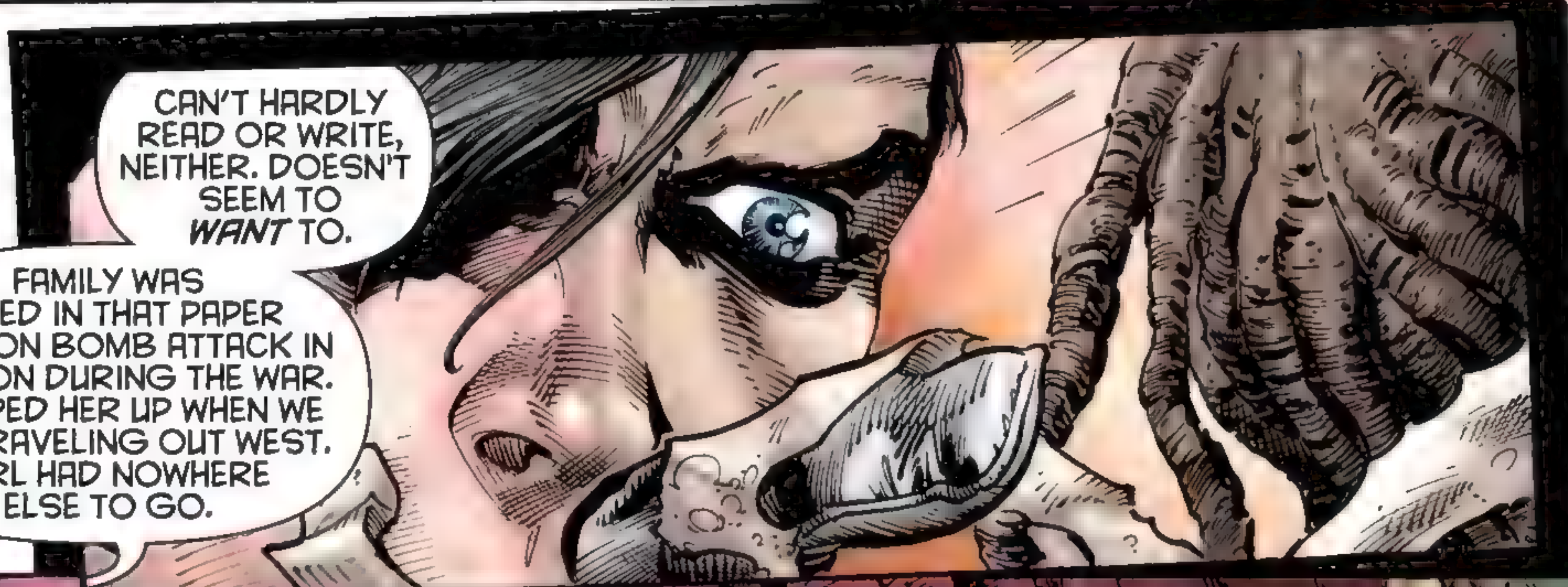
SHE WON'T ANSWER YOU, MISTER.



A SHY
ONE, IS
SHE?

NO,
SIR.

SHE
HASN'T GOT A
TONGUE.



CAN'T HARDLY
READ OR WRITE,
NEITHER. DOESN'T
SEEM TO
WANT TO.

FAMILY WAS
KILLED IN THAT PAPER
BALLOON BOMB ATTACK IN
OREGON DURING THE WAR.
SCRAPED HER UP WHEN WE
WAS TRAVELING OUT WEST.
GIRL HAD NOWHERE
ELSE TO GO.



DID YOU DO
THIS TO HER,
MR. HALY?

ANSWER
CAREFULLY.

NO.
I TOLD
YOU.

WE
FOUND
HER LIKE
THAT.

I KNOW THE
COURT ONLY WANTS
THE *BEST*... I'D NEVER
JEOPARDIZE
THEIR PICK.



MARY.

I'VE MADE
ARRANGE-
MENTS WITH MR.
HALY. WE WORK
FOR SOME VERY,
VERY POWERFUL
PEOPLE.

YOU'RE
TO COME WITH
ME. YOU'LL HAVE
A HOME, A NEST
OF YOUR OWN.
AND IMPORTANT,
MEANINGFUL
WORK.

WOULD
YOU LIKE
THAT?



OH, NO,
MARY. YOU
WON'T NEED
THAT MASK
ANYMORE.

YOU'LL
HAVE QUITE
A *NEW* ONE,
IN FACT.

After a savage attack
that nearly ended her life,
the brilliant Barbara
Gordon returns to the
streets as both survivor
and avenger...

BATGIRL
IN

NIGHT OF THE OWLS IN THE LINE OF FIRE

HOLY
CATS.

GAIL SIMONE WRITER
ARDIAN SYAF PENCILLER
VICENTE CIFUENTES INKER
ULISES ARREOLA COLORS
DAVE SHARPE LETTERS

NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 6:07 PM...

What the hell
am I fighting?

SKRIT

HEY.

It hits like a
rifle crack, for
God's sake.

The shock plates in my
gauntlets are barely
holding together!

HEY!

And she moves like
Nightwing. A lot
like Nightwing.

GUHH.

Little Jakarta, home of
Gotham's long-standing
Indonesian community
and the best take-out
in the city.

An explosion right in the
middle of the dinner hour
on the busiest street on
the grid. Someone's
sending a message.

The police band says
witnesses saw a small
balloon of some kind
carrying the bomb.

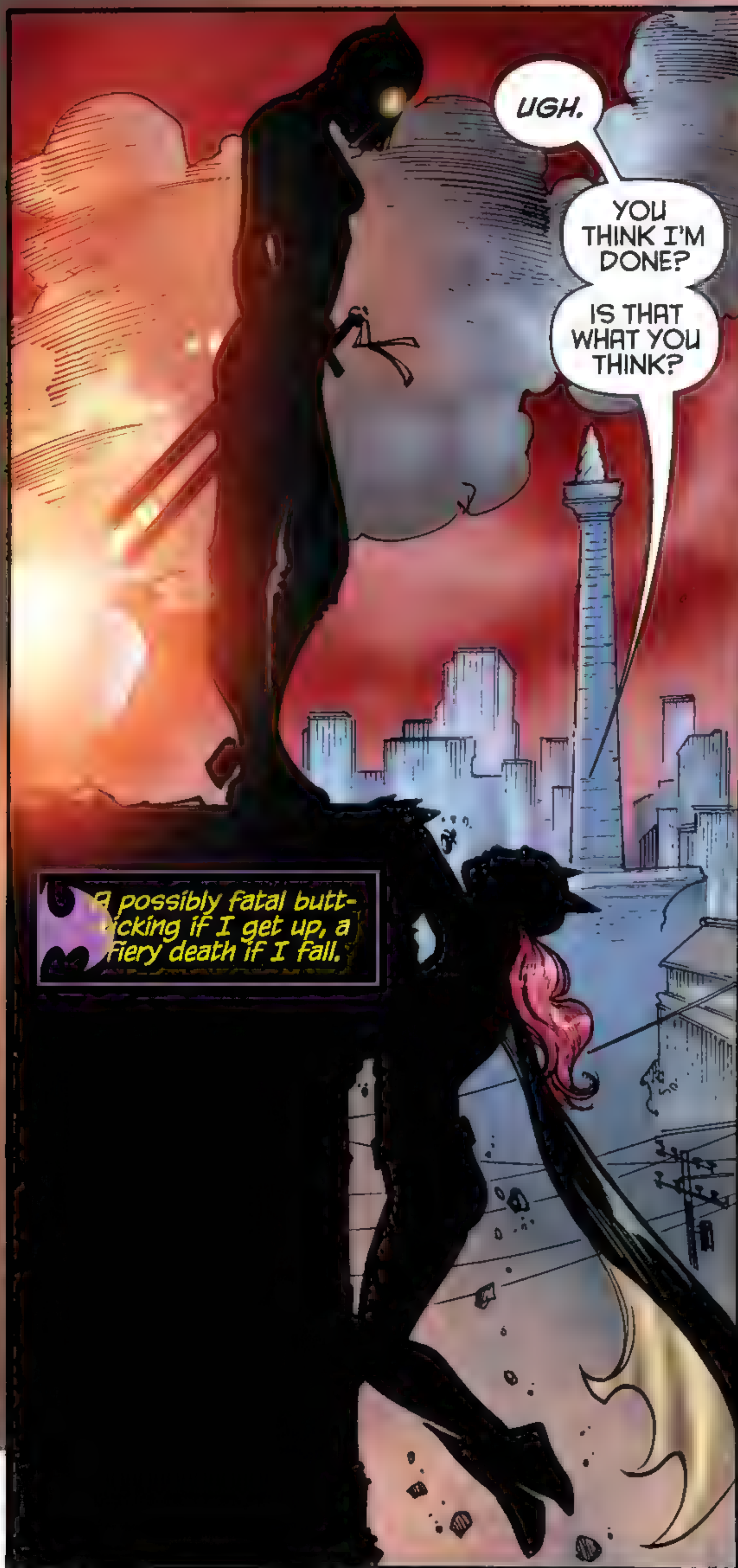
Came to see if
I could help.

UHHNF.

Then this silent
terror shows up
from the ashes.

And now it
looks like...

...I might be added to
the list of casualties.



UGH.

YOU
THINK I'M
DONE?

IS THAT
WHAT YOU
THINK?

A possibly fatal butt-
kicking if I get up, a
fiery death if I fall.



UH.

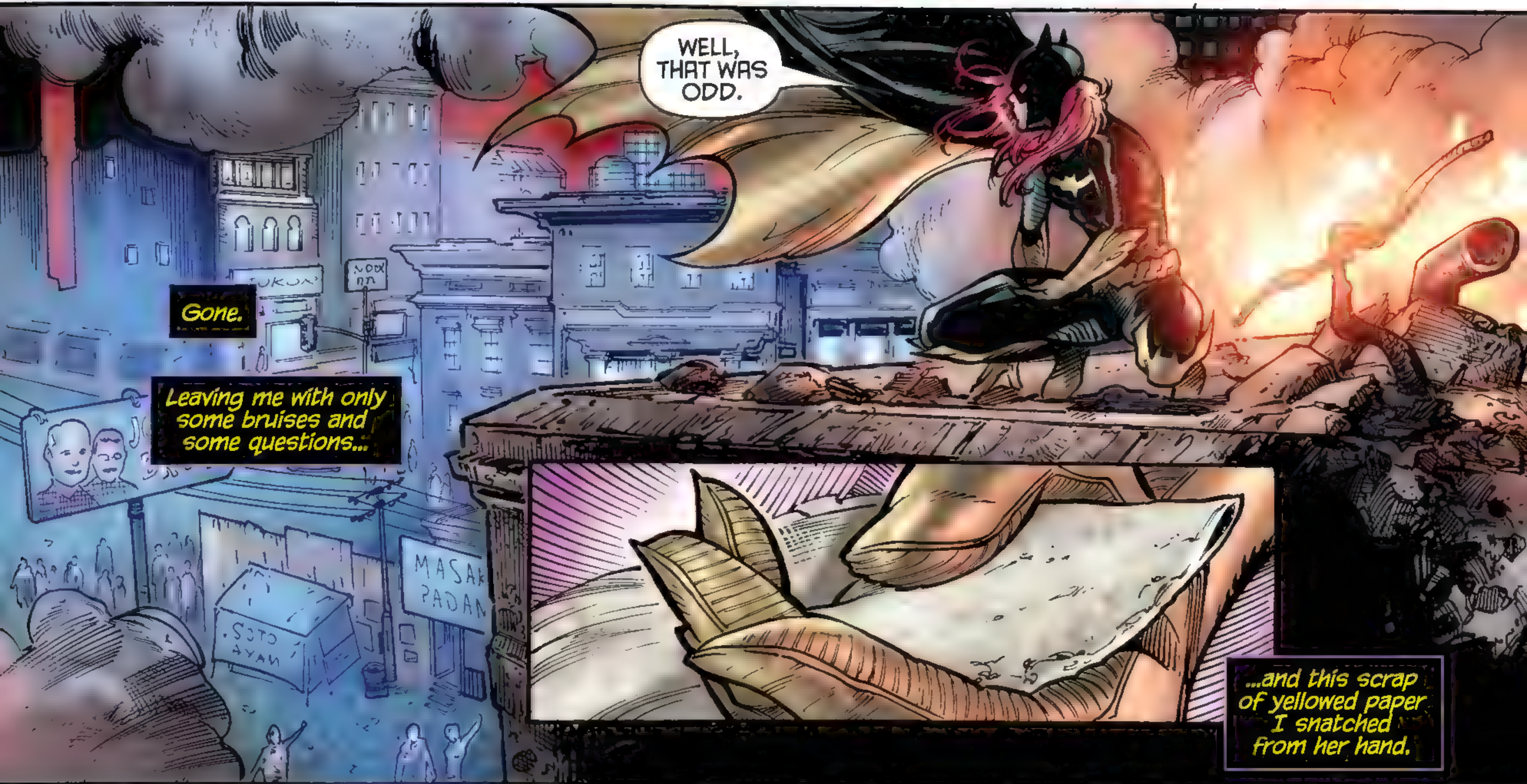
HI?

WHEN
I GET UP,
I AM SO
GOING TO
POUND
YOU!



And then she
left. Just...gone.

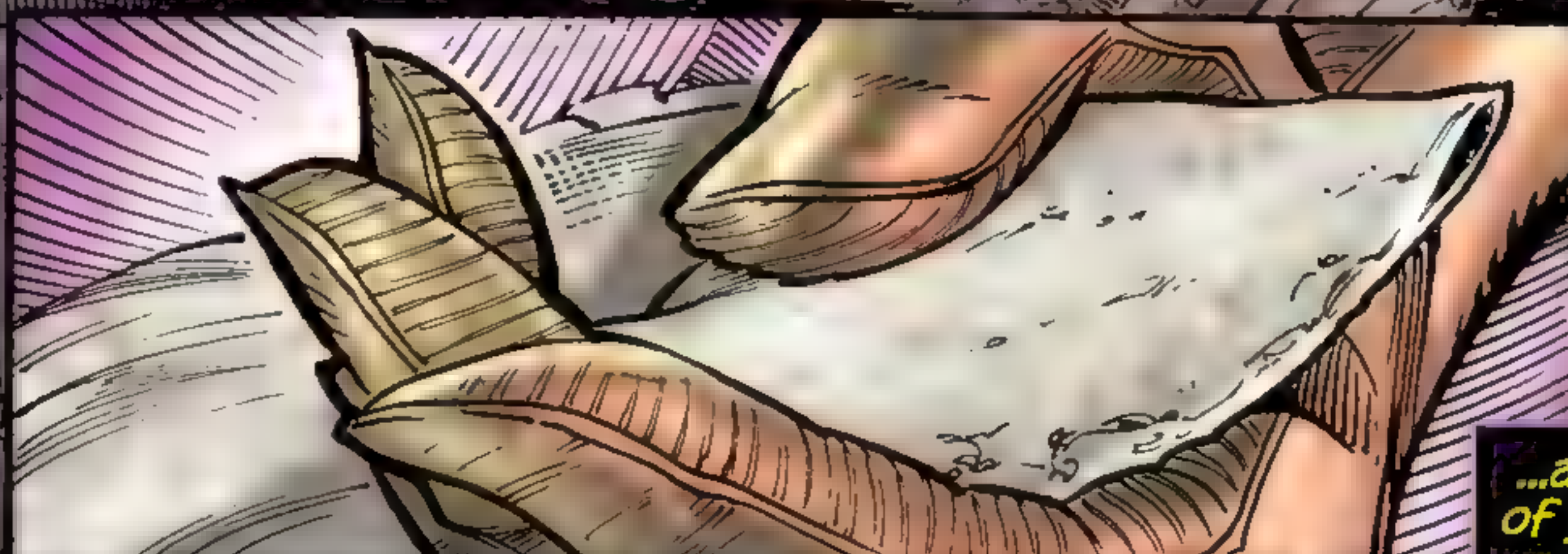
I was completely
vulnerable. She
freaking had me.



WELL,
THAT WAS
ODD.

Gone.

Leaving me with only
some bruises and
some questions...



...and this scrap
of yellowed paper
I snatched
from her hand.

GOTHAM CITY POLICE HEADQUARTERS.

7:04 PM...

I feel a shudder.
Like a ghost walking
over my grave.

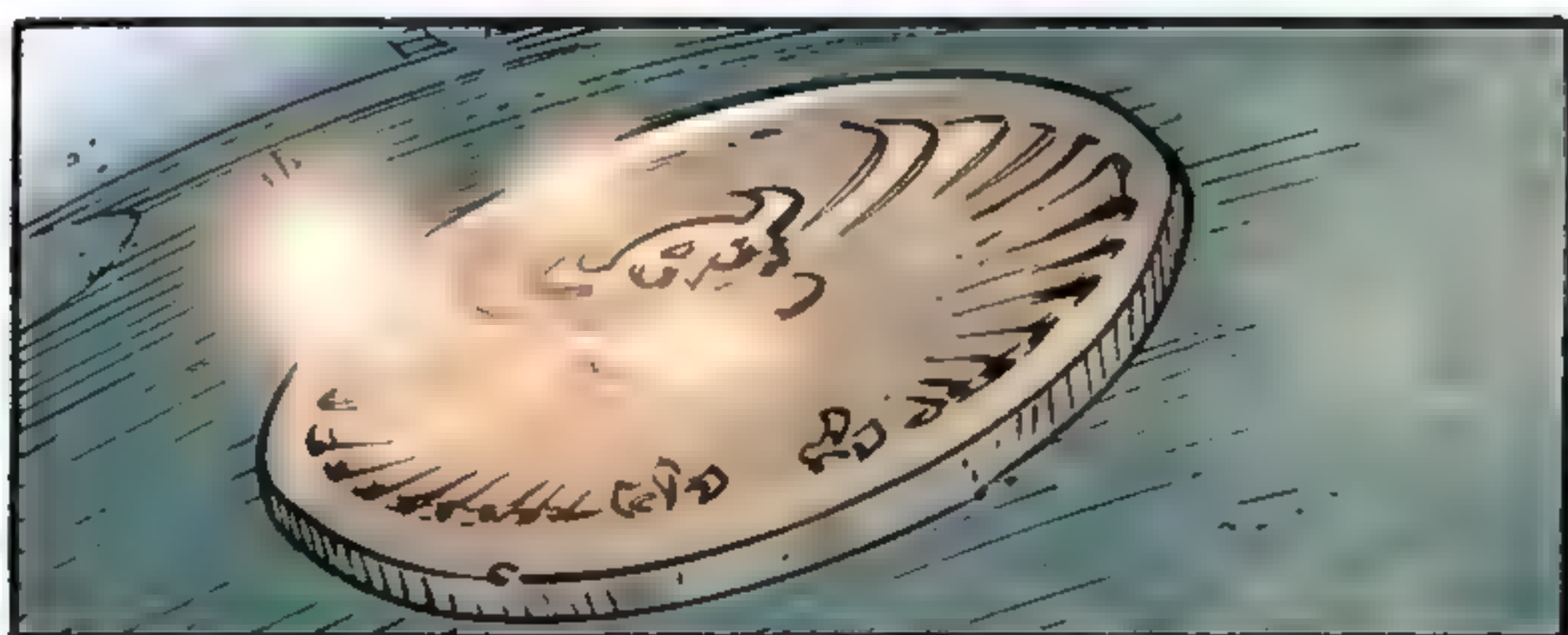
What the hell is going
on in Gotham tonight?



YOU
DROPPED
SOMETHING,
SIR.

I
DID?

THANKS.



ONE OF OUR HANDS HAS
ARRANGED A SMALL...
FIREWORKS DISPLAY ALL
HER OWN, SHOULD YOU
DOUBT THE SINCERITY
OF OUR THREAT.

WE HAVE
BEEN SAVING A
WAREHOUSE
FULL OF VINTAGE
ORDNANCE FOR
JUST SUCH A
PURPOSE.

EYES
FORWARD,
COMMISSIONER
GORDON,
ALWAYS
FORWARD.



TURN AROUND, AND
YOUR DAUGHTER
DIES.

REACH FOR
YOUR GUN, AND
YOUR DAUGHTER
DIES.

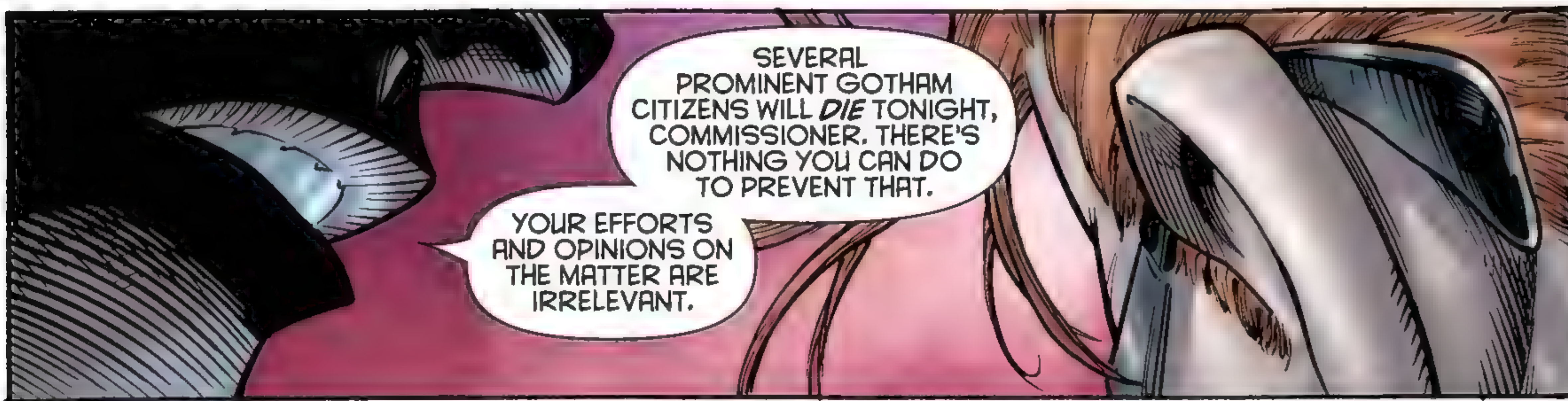
SPEAK WITHOUT
PERMISSION, AND
YOUR DAUGHTER
DIES.



YOUR DAUGHTER
SUFFERED A TERRIBLE
TRAUMA THREE YEARS
AGO.

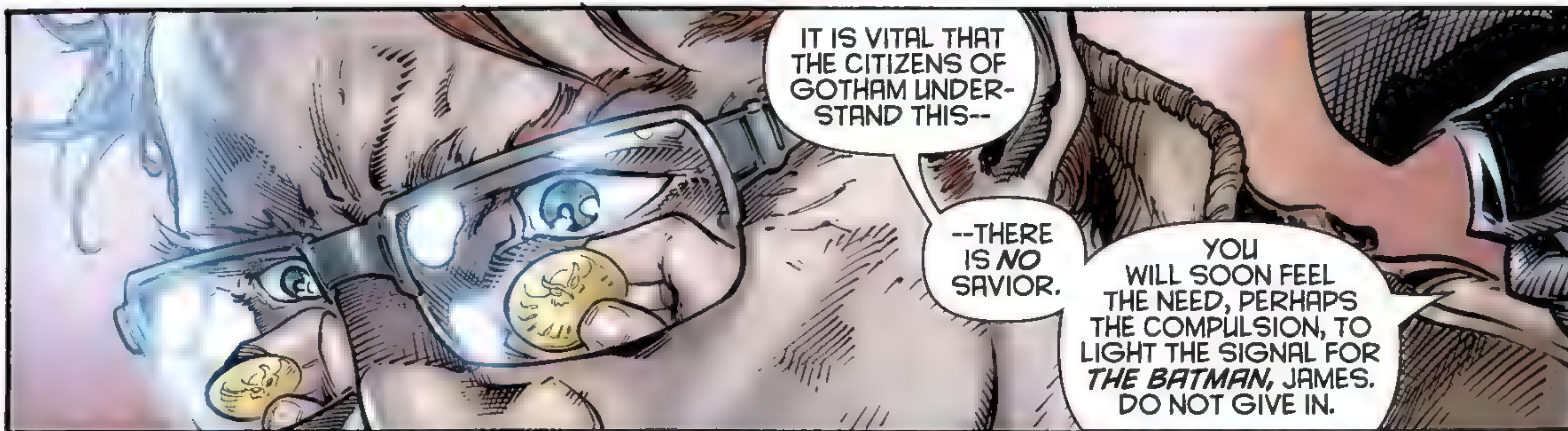
DO YOU THINK
SHE COULD SURVIVE
ANOTHER SIMILAR
NIGHT?

COULD
YOU?



SEVERAL PROMINENT GOTHAM CITIZENS WILL *DIE* TONIGHT, COMMISSIONER. THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT THAT.

YOUR EFFORTS AND OPINIONS ON THE MATTER ARE IRRELEVANT.



IT IS VITAL THAT THE CITIZENS OF GOTHAM UNDERSTAND THIS--

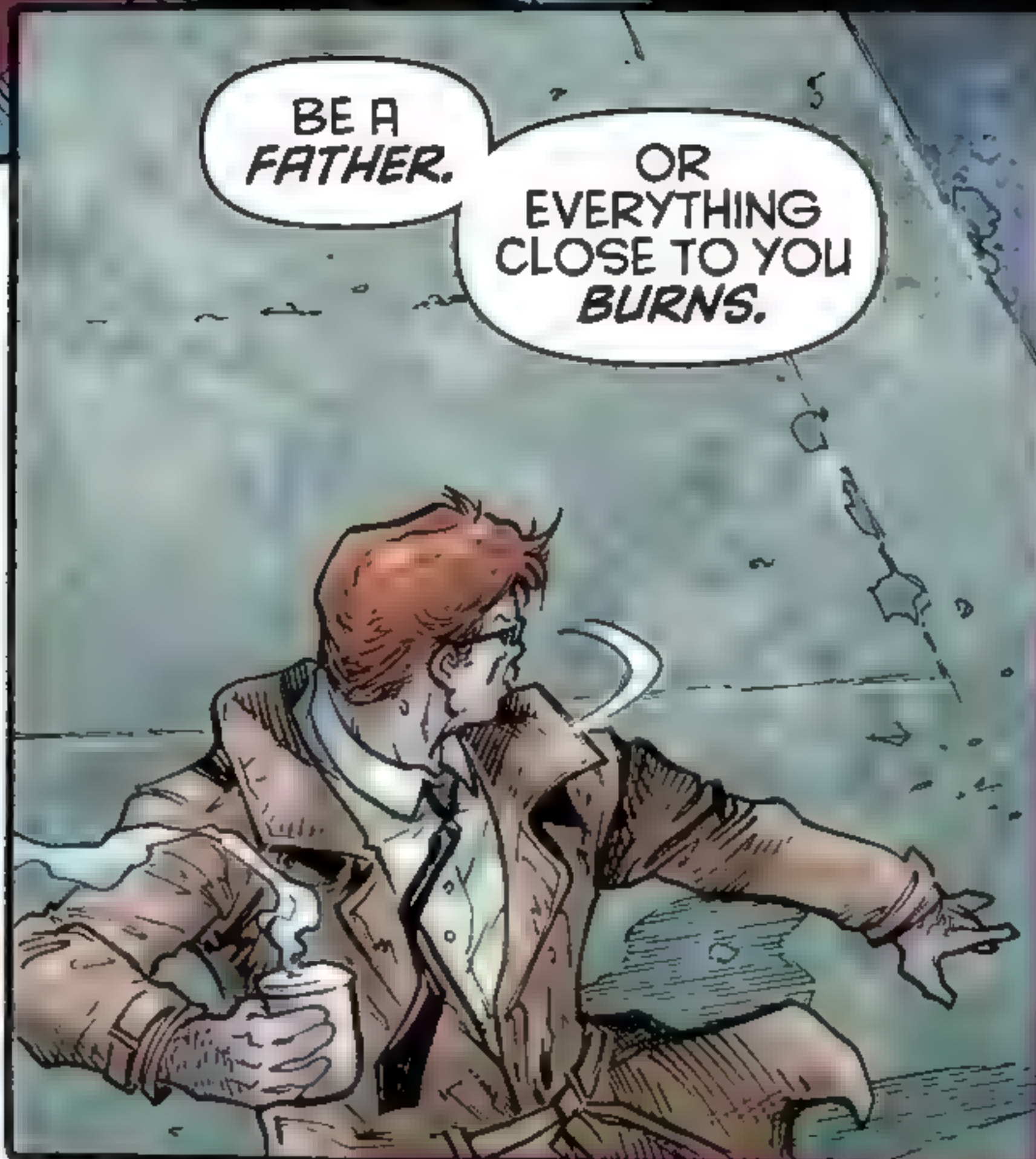
--THERE IS *NO* SAVIOR.

YOU WILL SOON FEEL THE NEED, PERHAPS THE COMPULSION, TO LIGHT THE SIGNAL FOR *THE BATMAN*, JAMES. DO NOT GIVE IN.



THE RABBLE MUST NEVER BE ALLOWED TO BELIEVE *ONE MAN* OWNS WHAT GOTHAM IS AT NIGHT.

GO UPSTAIRS. DRINK YOUR COFFEE. DON'T WARN *ANYONE*. WE'LL BE WATCHING.



BE A *FATHER*.

OR EVERYTHING CLOSE TO YOU *BURNS*.



HEY...HEY, COMMISSIONER! WE'VE GOT AN *EXPLOSION* UP IN THE INDONESIA GRID. NO CASUALTIES, THANK GOD, BUT WHAT A *MESS*.

I'LL BE IN MY OFFICE, RENNY.

TEN MINUTES LATER...



HEY? YOO HOO?

ALYSIA?

Huh. She should be home by now.

Hope she's okay.



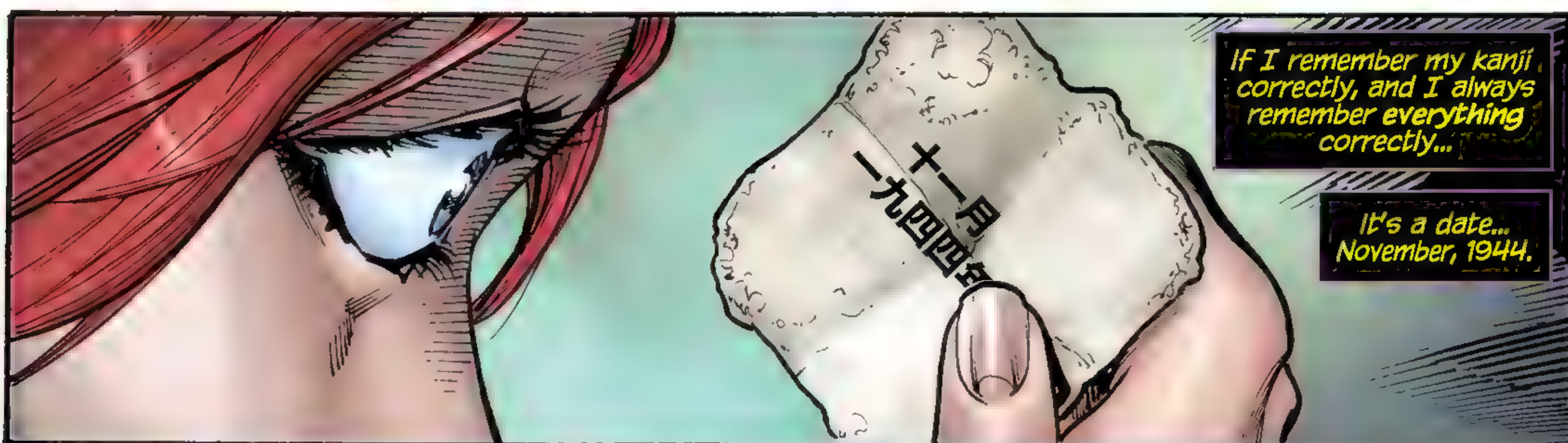
A balloon bomb,
and a scrap of
decades-old paper.



I don't like where
this is headed.

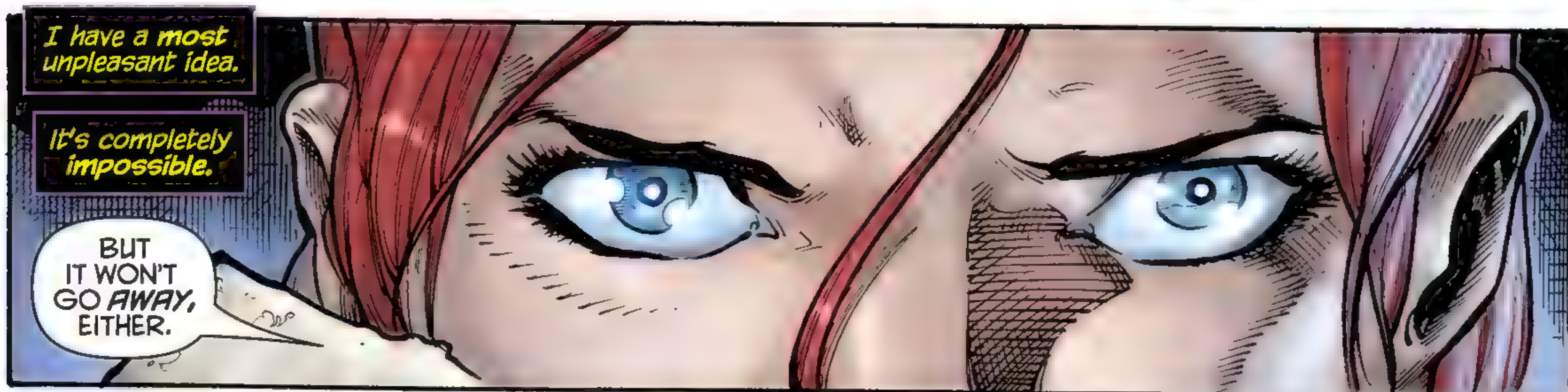


OUCH.



If I remember my kanji
correctly, and I always
remember everything
correctly...

It's a date...
November, 1944.



I have a most
unpleasant idea.

It's completely
impossible.

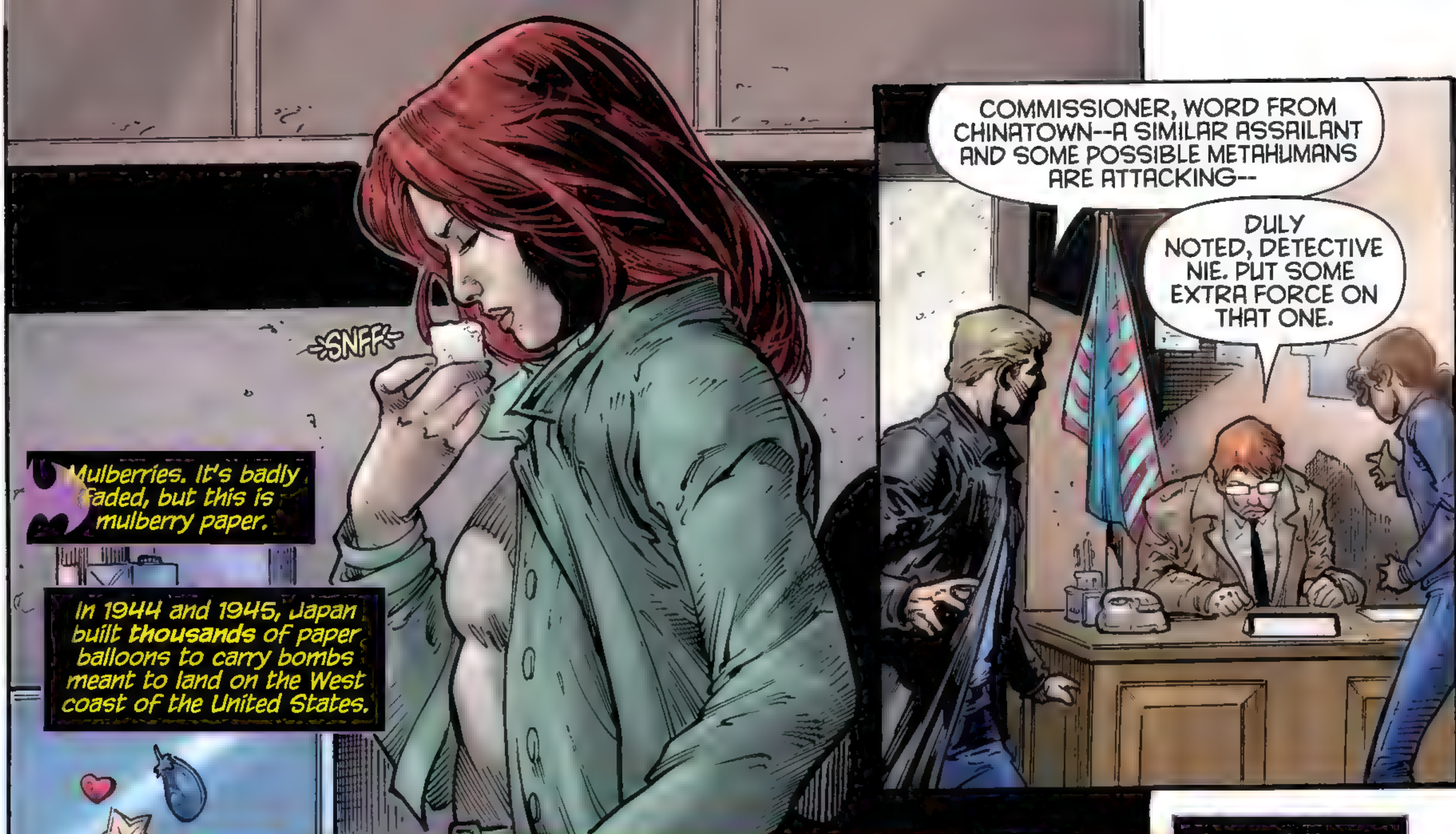
BUT
IT WON'T
GO AWAY,
EITHER.



COMMISSIONER,
RADIO REPORT JUST
CAME IN FROM THE GOTHAM
BARRENS--SOME TRAINING
EXERCISES HAVE GONE AWRY
DUE TO AN UNKNOWN
ASSAILANT ON THE
GROUNDS.

THE GUYS
SAY THEY HAVE IT
UNDER CONTROL
BUT ARE SWITCHING
TO LIVE AMMO.

...
KEEP ME
INFORMED,
DETECTIVE
MCKENNA.



COMMISSIONER, WORD FROM CHINATOWN--A SIMILAR ASSAILANT AND SOME POSSIBLE METAHUMANS ARE ATTACKING--

DULY NOTED, DETECTIVE NIE. PUT SOME EXTRA FORCE ON THAT ONE.

Mulberries. It's badly faded, but this is mulberry paper.

In 1944 and 1945, Japan built thousands of paper balloons to carry bombs meant to land on the West coast of the United States.

They sent them up and let them ride the jet stream.

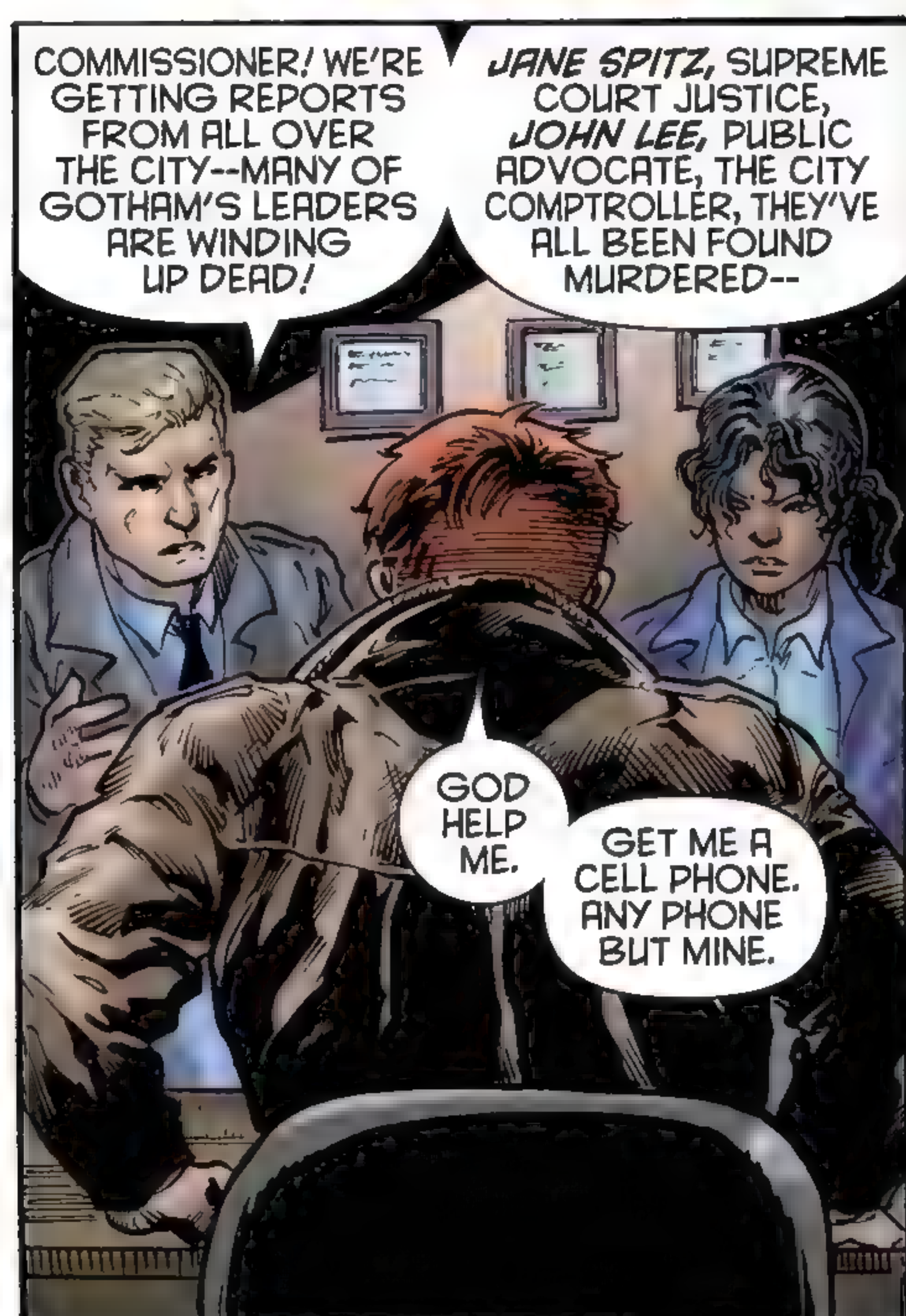
Hundreds of them landed as far inland as Detroit.

In fact, one landed in Oregon and caused the only recorded American casualties in the continental U.S....a family out on a picnic, of all things.

The media covered it all up...afraid of the panic that would ensue.

Which was the whole point. Panic.

How in God's name could one of these show up in Gotham, decades later?



COMMISSIONER! WE'RE GETTING REPORTS FROM ALL OVER THE CITY--MANY OF GOTHAM'S LEADERS ARE WINDING UP DEAD!

JANE SPITZ, SUPREME COURT JUSTICE, JOHN LEE, PUBLIC ADVOCATE, THE CITY COMPTROLLER, THEY'VE ALL BEEN FOUND MURDERED--

GOD HELP ME.

GET ME A CELL PHONE. ANY PHONE BUT MINE.



BARBARA? IT'S YOUR FATHER...

OH, COMMISSIONER. WE DID GIVE YOU A WARNING, DIDN'T WE?

REMEMBER WHAT WE SAID?



EVERYONE CLOSE TO YOU BURNS?

RENNY!

DON'T OPEN THE DOOR!



GOTHAM CITY
POLICE DEPARTMENT

WHAT THE
HELL?

OH,
NO.

FWOOMP

incoming message from Alfred Pennyworth--

TO ALL THE ALLIES OF THE BAT PRESENTLY IN GOTHAM...

...I SEND THIS WITH THE GREATEST URGENCY.

TONIGHT, THE COURT OF OWLS HAS SENT THEIR ASSASSINS TO KILL NEARLY FORTY PEOPLE ACROSS THE CITY.

THE COURT'S TARGETS ARE ALL GOTHAM LEADERS. PEOPLE WHO SHAPE THIS CITY.

I HAVE UPLOADED A LIST OF THE TARGETS' NAMES, HERE.

THE COURT'S ASSASSINS, THE "TALONS," ARE ALREADY EN ROUTE TO THEIR TARGETS.

THEY ARE HIGHLY TRAINED KILLERS--

--WITH EXTRAORDINARY REGENERATIVE ABILITIES.

FOR MANY OF THEIR TARGETS, I FEAR IT MAY BE TOO LATE TO--

BANG! BANG!

I WILL KEEP THE--

--KEEP THE LINE TO THE CAVE OPEN AS LONG AS I CAN MANAGE.

BANG! BANG!

GOOD LUCK TO YOU...

...GOD HELP US ALL.

That explains a lot-- except what Alfred may be facing right now.

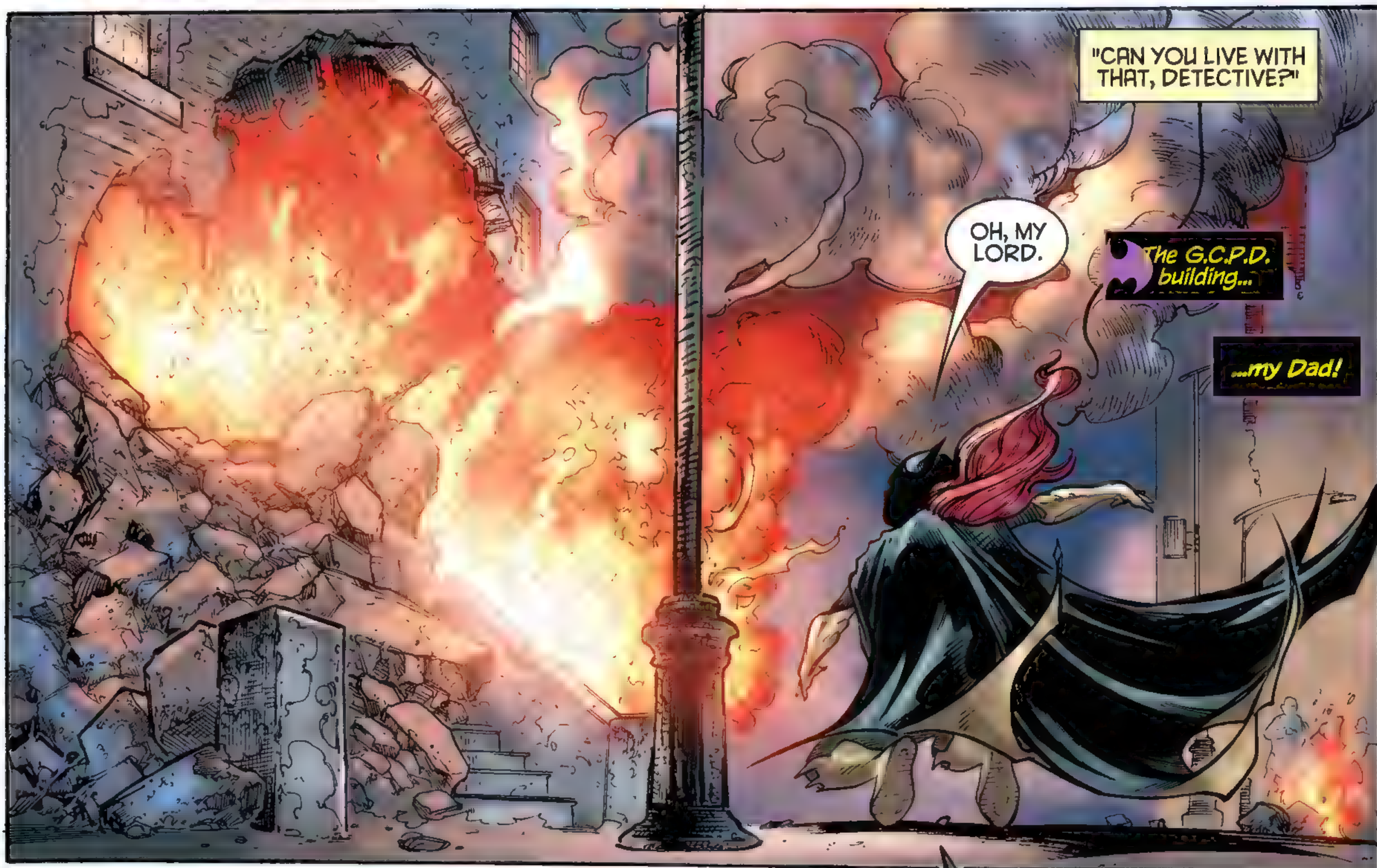
Uh oh--no clear path.

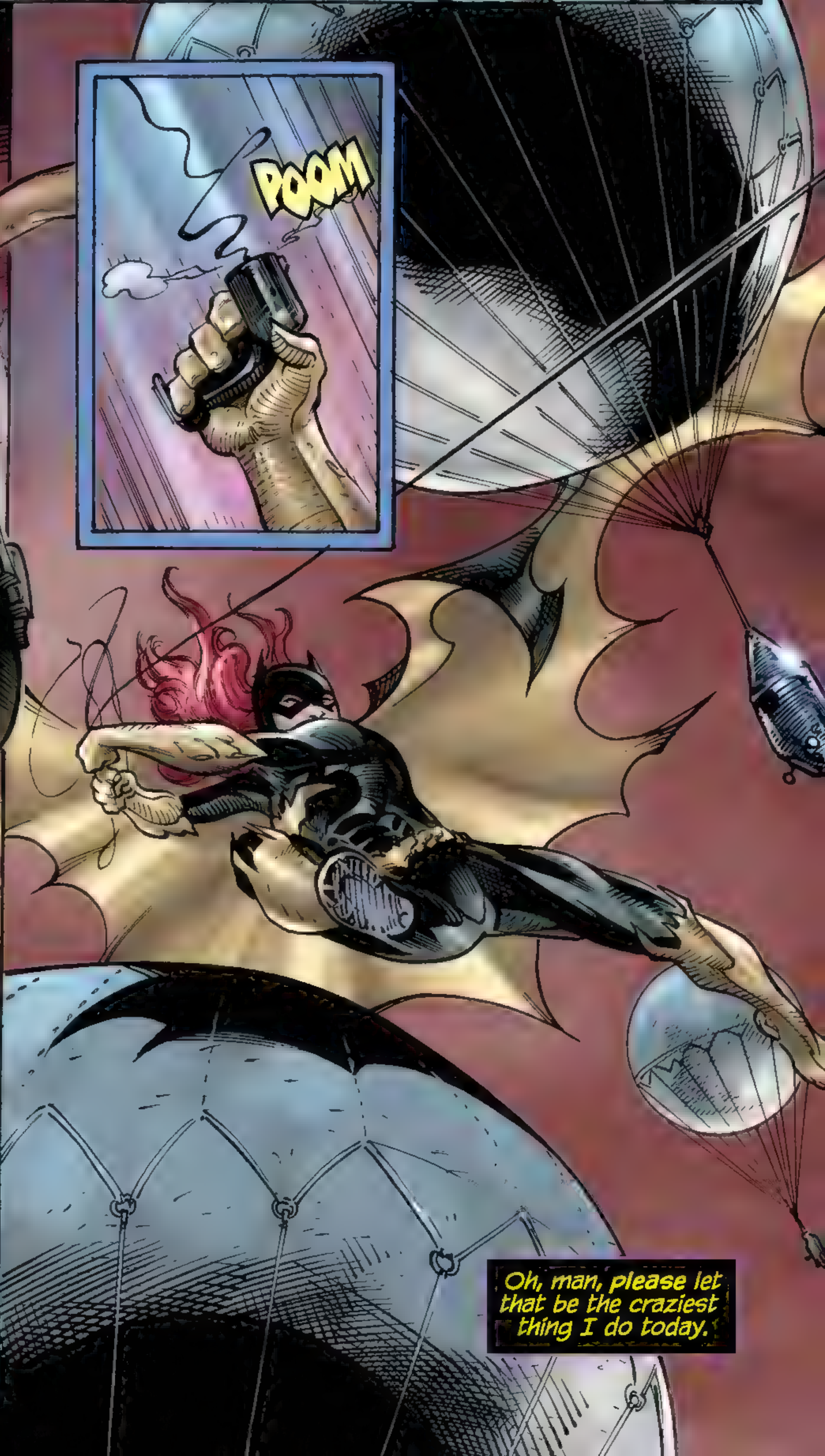
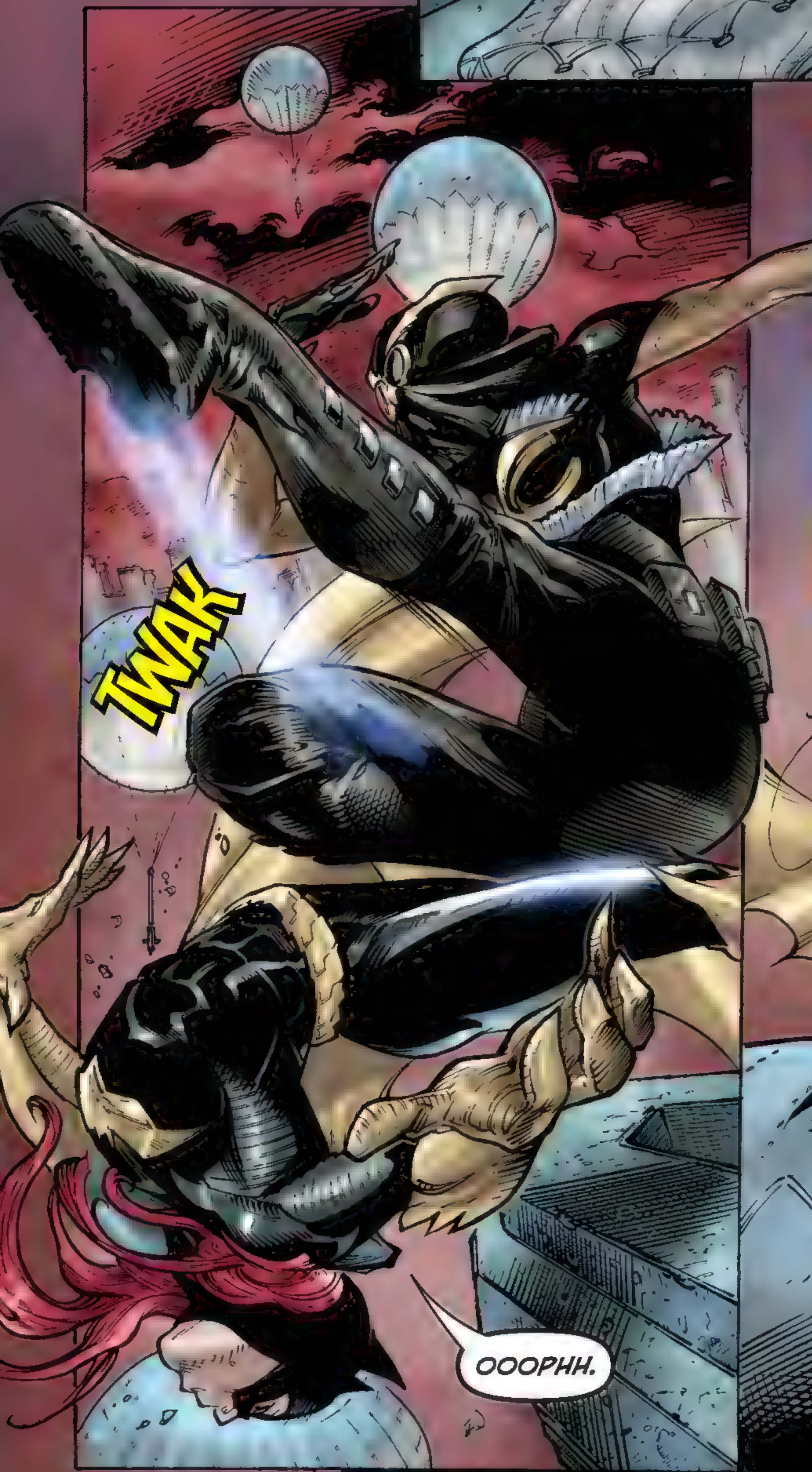
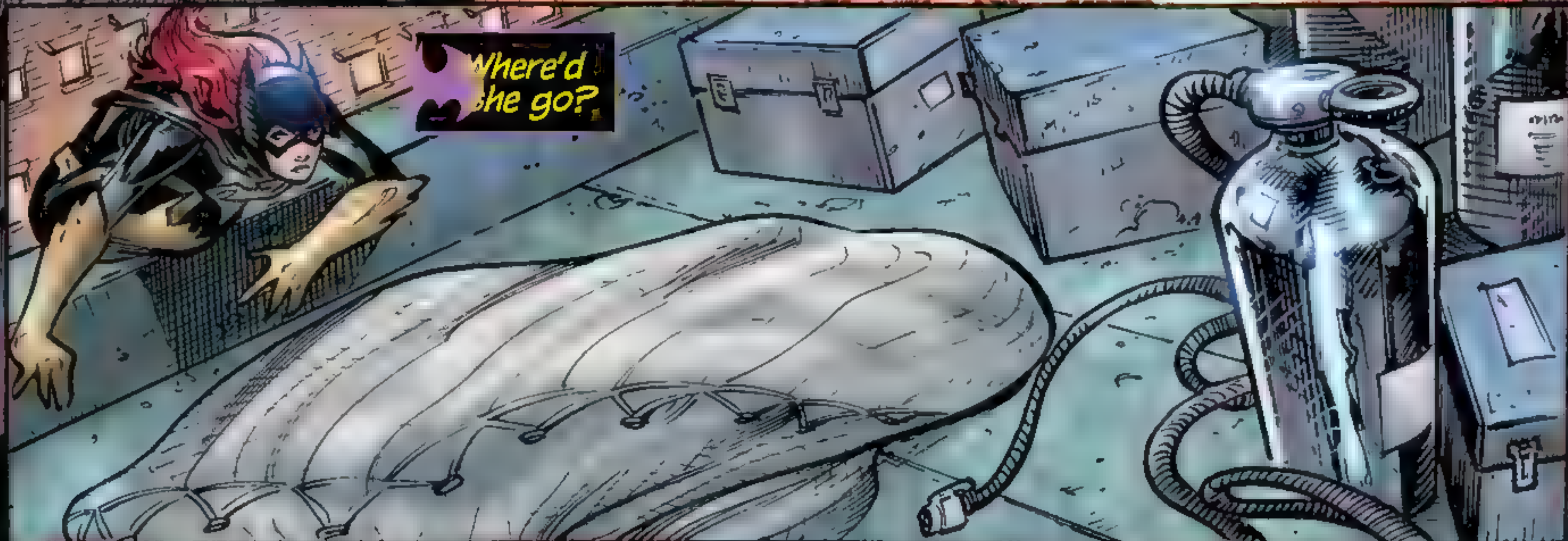
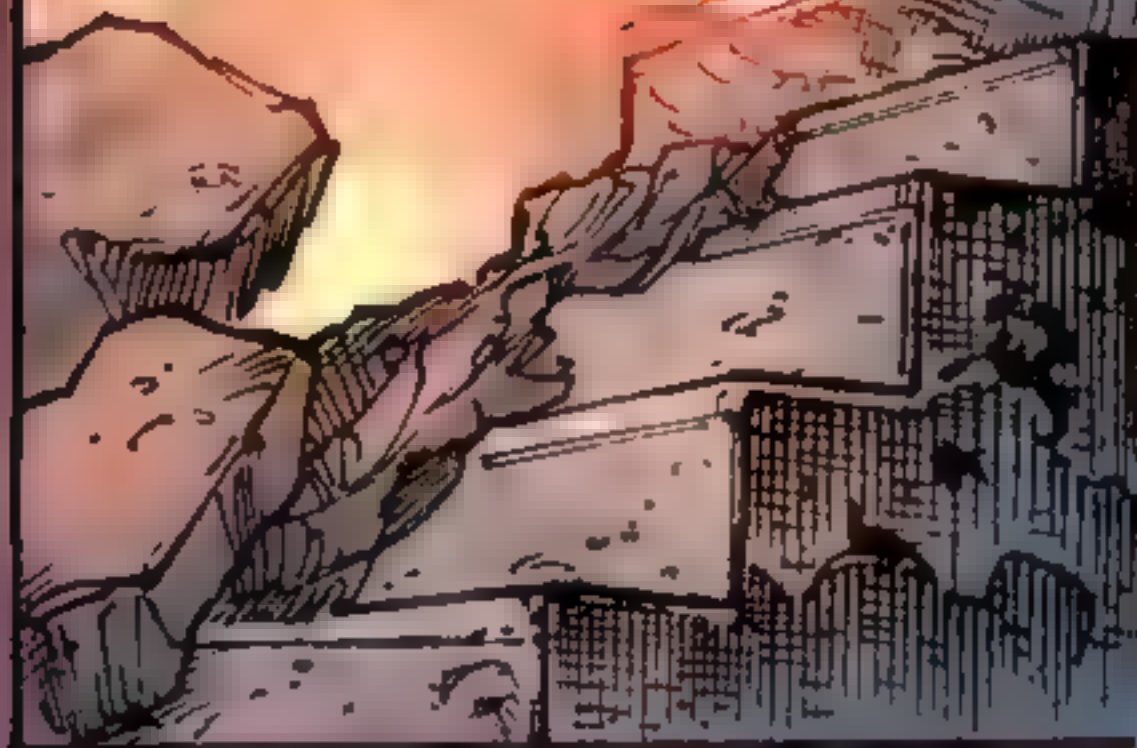
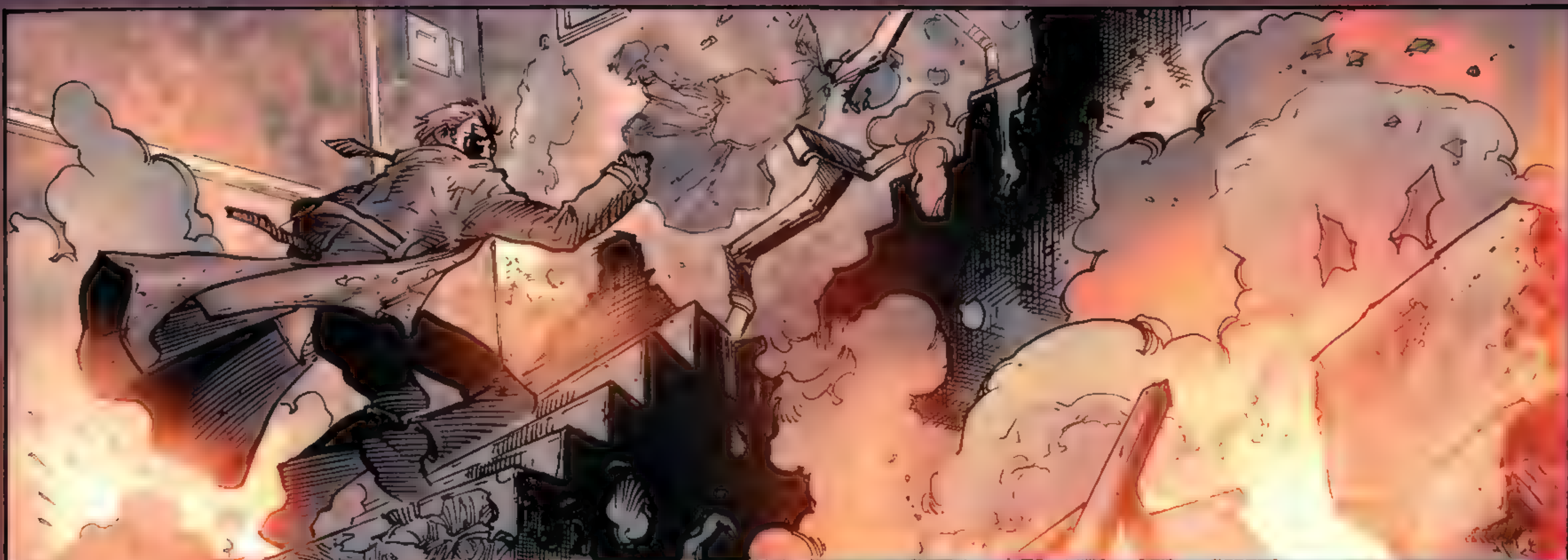
WHOA...

McKENNA! YOU'RE IN CHARGE ON THIS FLOOR NOW. GET THE SURVIVORS TO THE HOLDING CELLS, THEY'RE THE SAFEST PLACE IN THE BUILDING!

GET THE WORD OUT, NO ONE COMES WITHIN **EIGHT BLOCKS** OF THIS BUILDING! AND FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, SEND A SQUAD CAR TO MY DAUGHTER'S APARTMENT.

COMMISSIONER...





BATMAN
SAYS YOU
MONSTERS
HEAL *FAST*.

THAT
MEANS YOU
GET MY *NASTY*
BATARANGS,
TALON.

THUCK!

THUCK!

THUCK!

Mess with
my dad,
will you?

This isn't...isn't
quite going well.

GTT

And just to make
it all worse...



the wind is coming up.

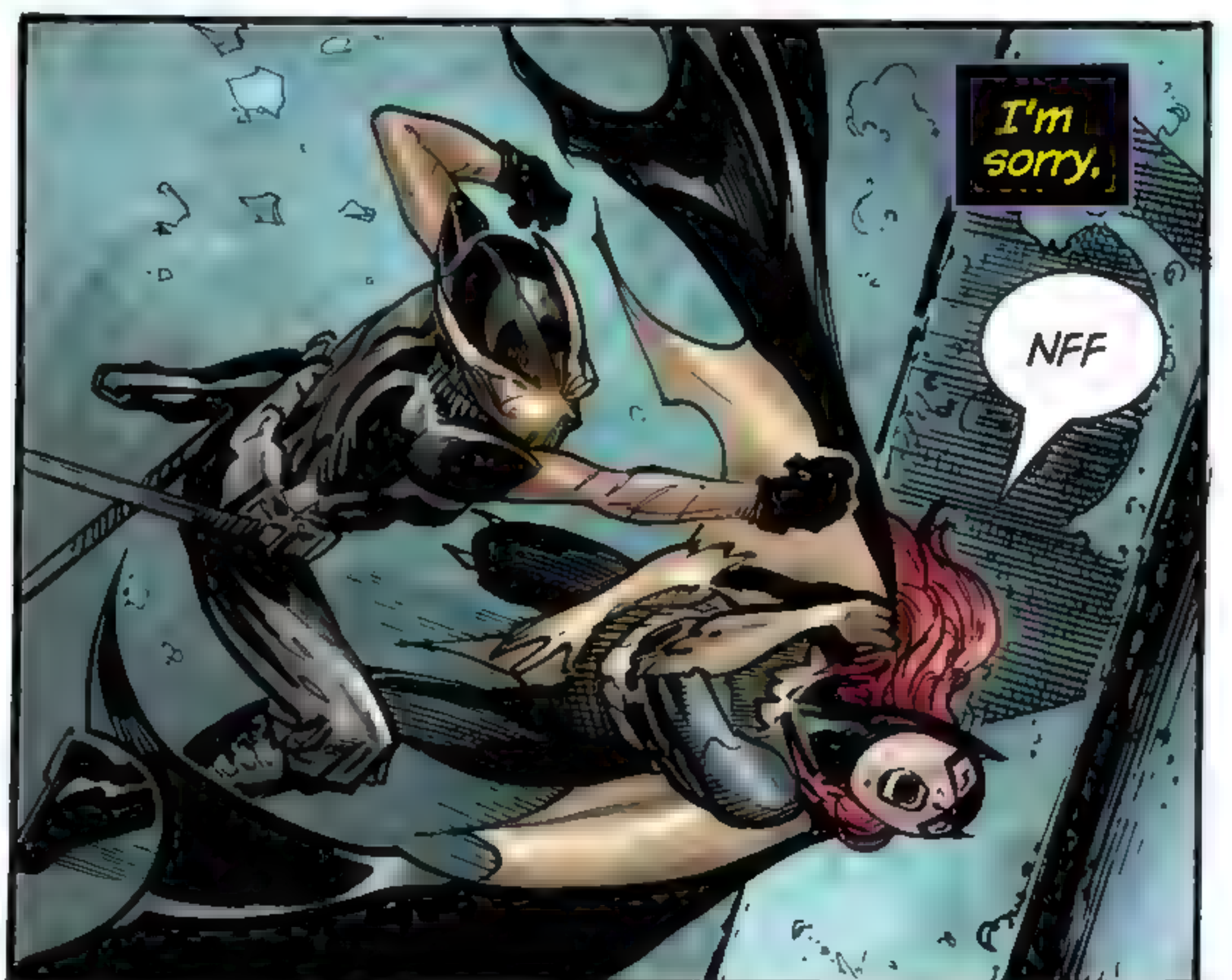


GGNN!



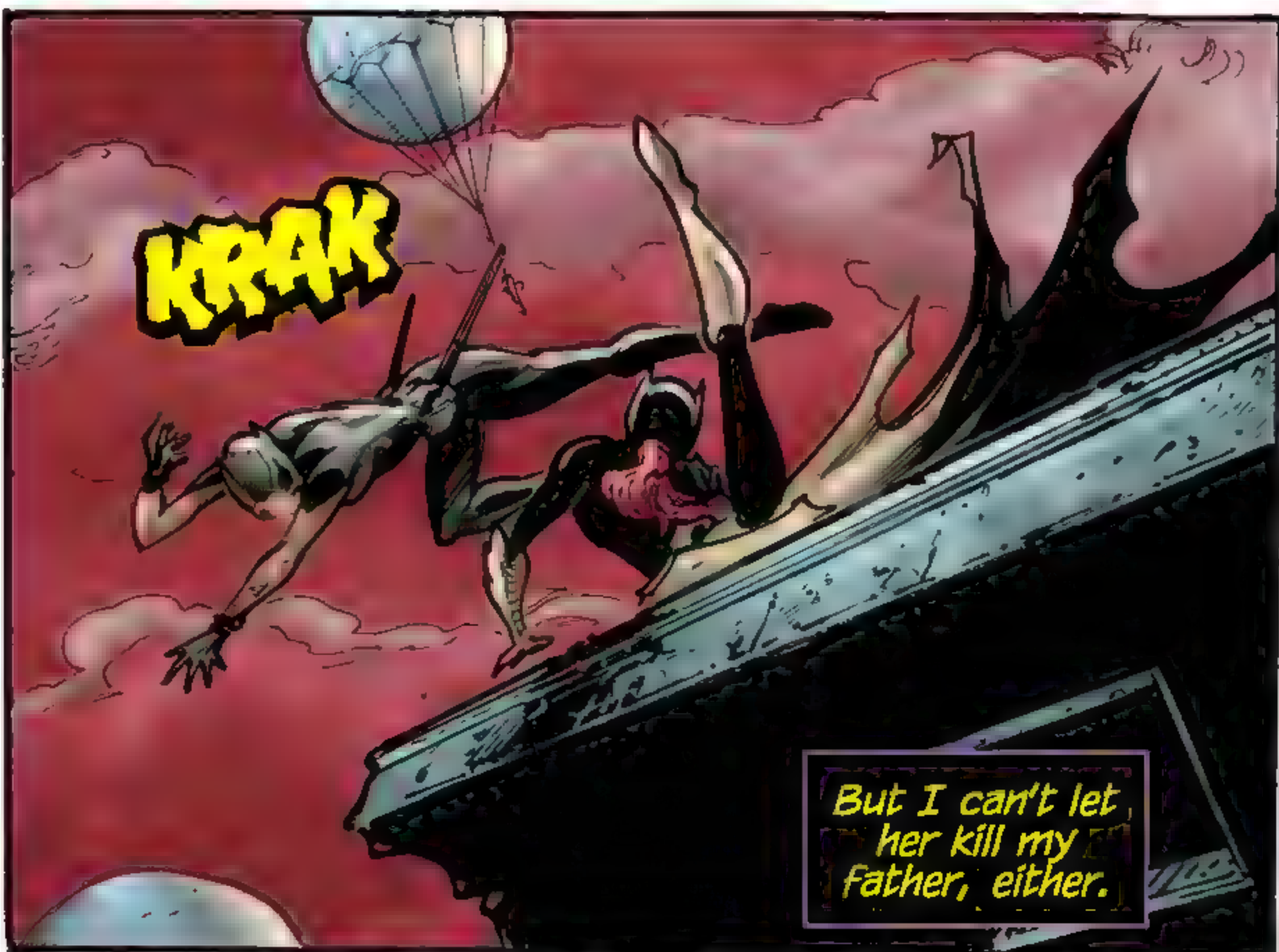
I can't...

...I can't fight her like this.



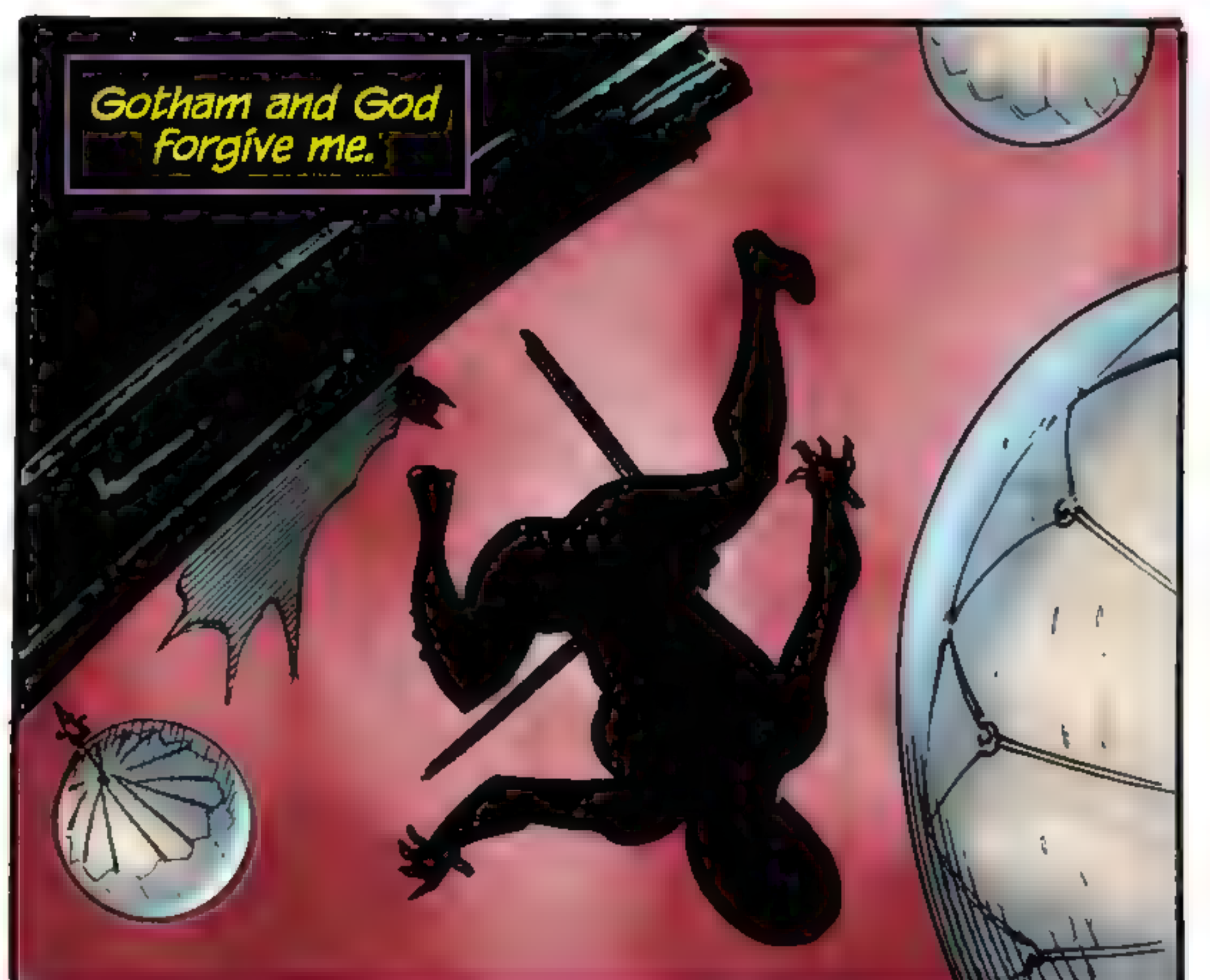
I'm sorry.

NFF

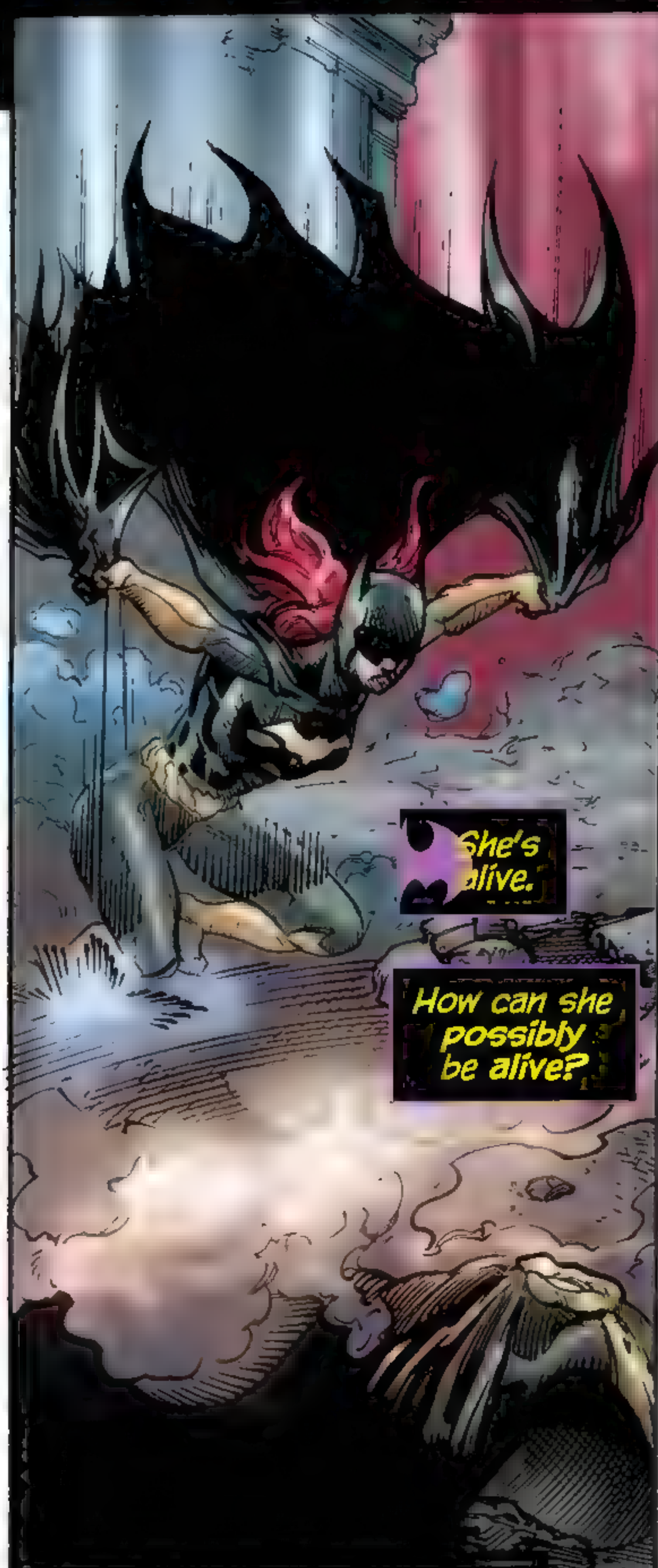


But I can't let her kill my father, either.

KRAK



Gotham and God forgive me.



MADE..
MADE IT, YOU
BASTARDS.

WE NEVER
DOUBTED YOU WOULD,
JAMES. IN FACT, WE
STRONGLY FELT THAT
THE BEST WAY TO GET
YOU TO DO WHAT
WE WANT...

KLIK

...WAS TO
TELL YOU NOT
TO DO IT.

THANK YOU
FOR BEING OUR
MESSENGER,
COMMISSIONER
GORDON.

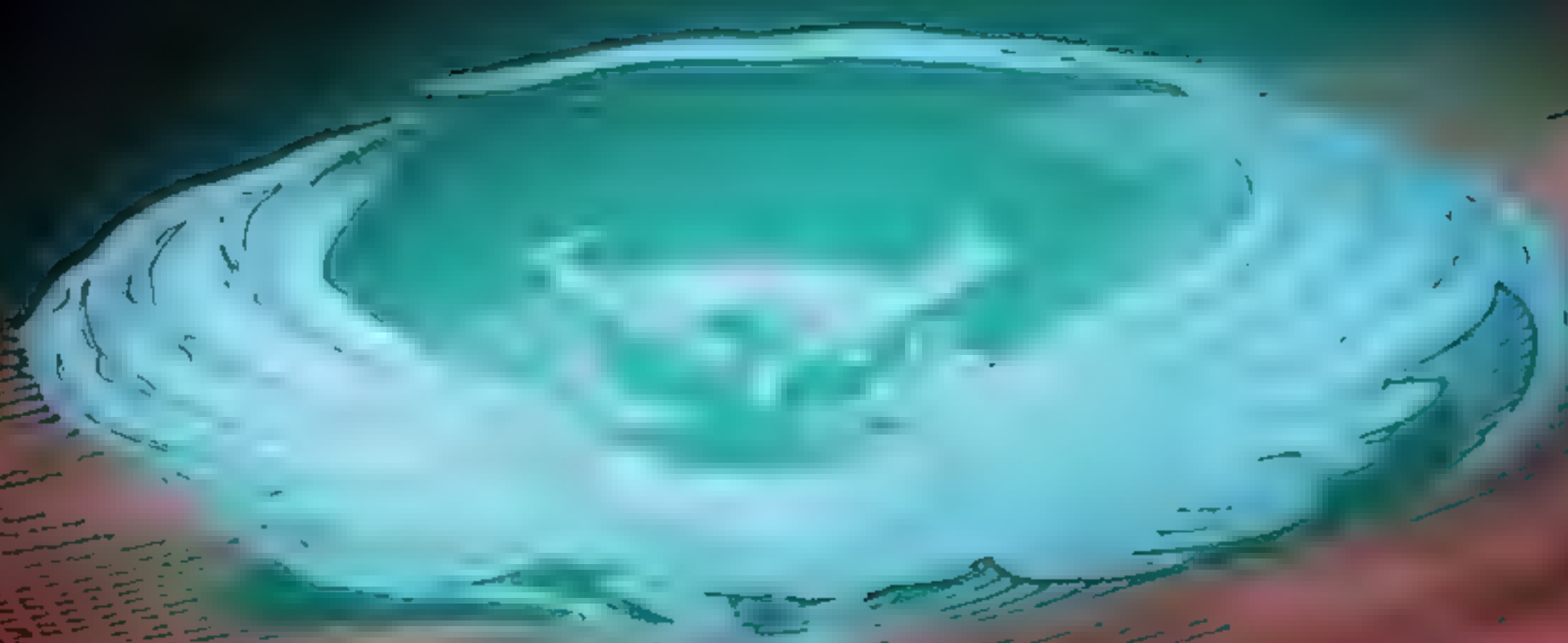
NO.

DAMN
YOU, NO!



Did we just...
did we just lose
Gotham?

I think we just
lost Gotham.



I miss you all. I
miss being home.

But I will see you soon, when
this hardship is over and we
can return in joy.

Your daughter,
Ayumi.

November 13,
1944.

Nagasaki.



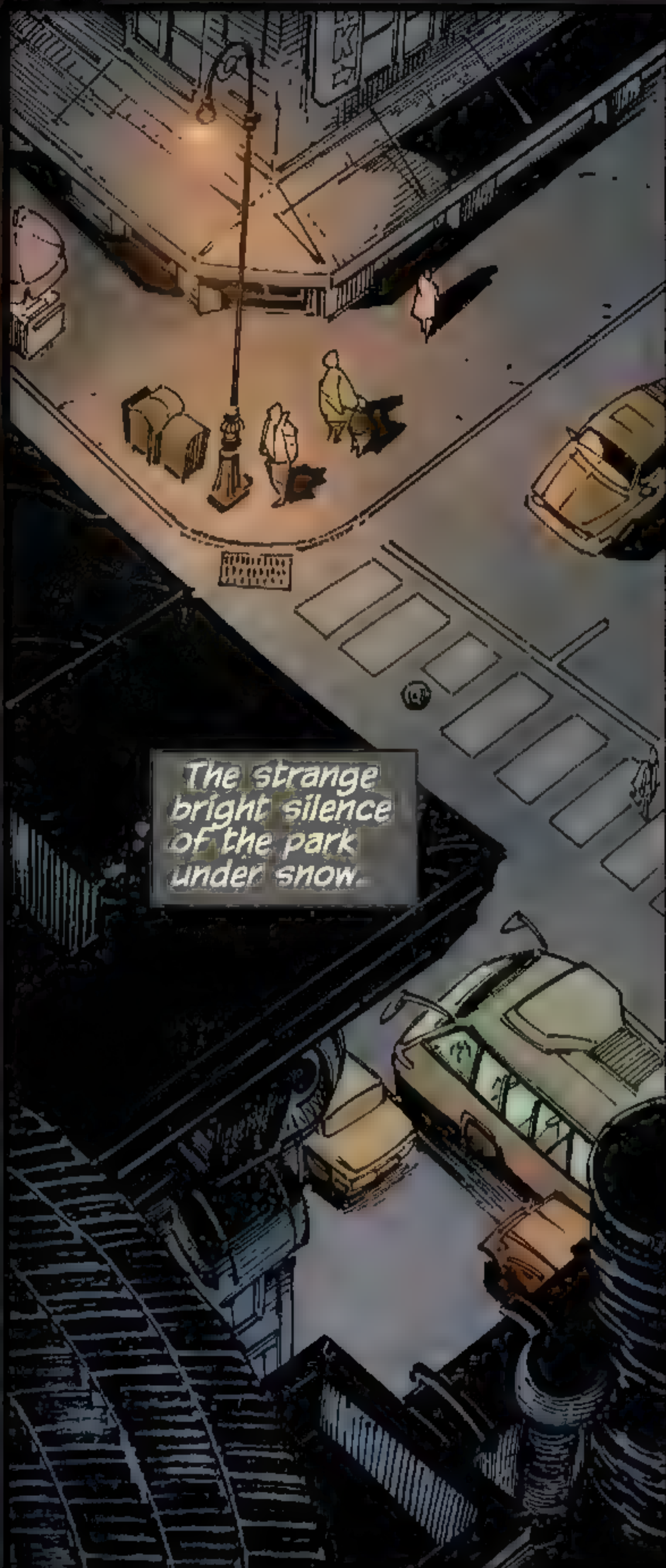




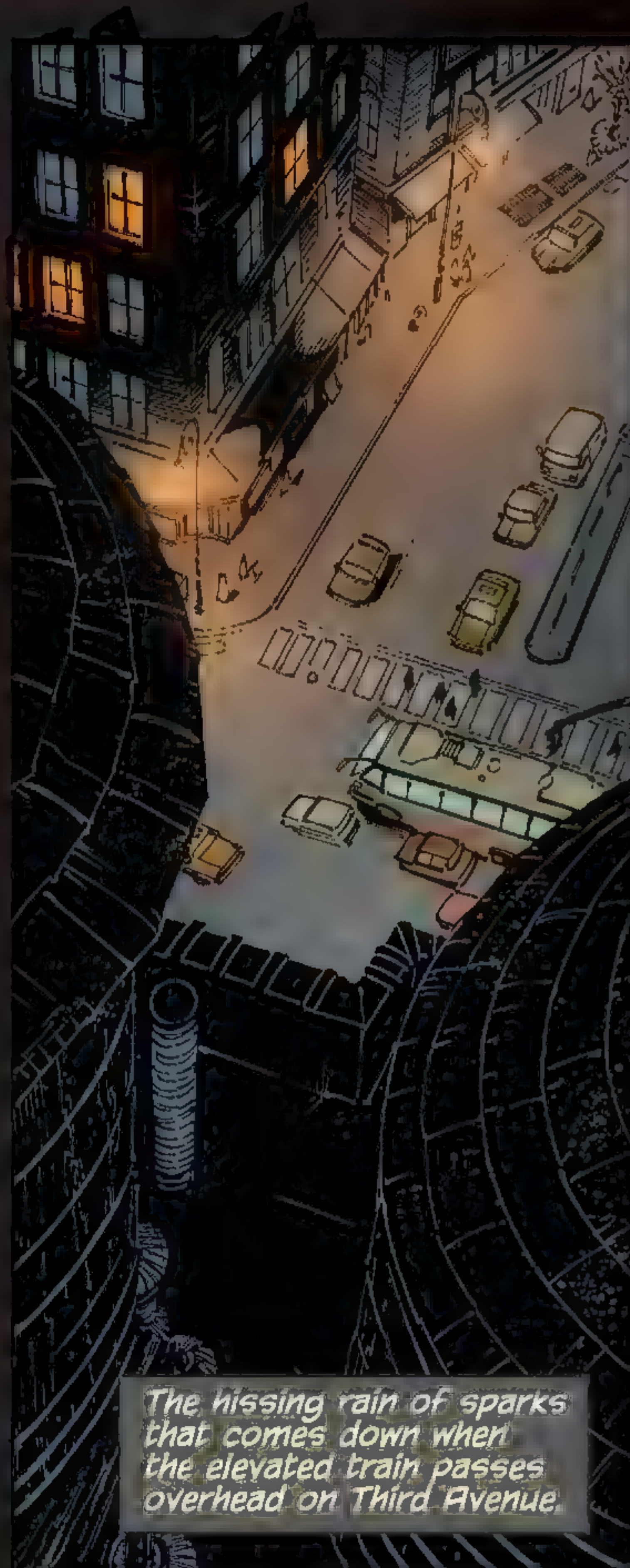
NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 7:01 PM...

*I've always believed
the best way to know
the city is to stay
close to the ground.*

*To feel the cracks
in the sidewalk
under your shoes.*



*The strange
bright silence
of the park
under snow.*



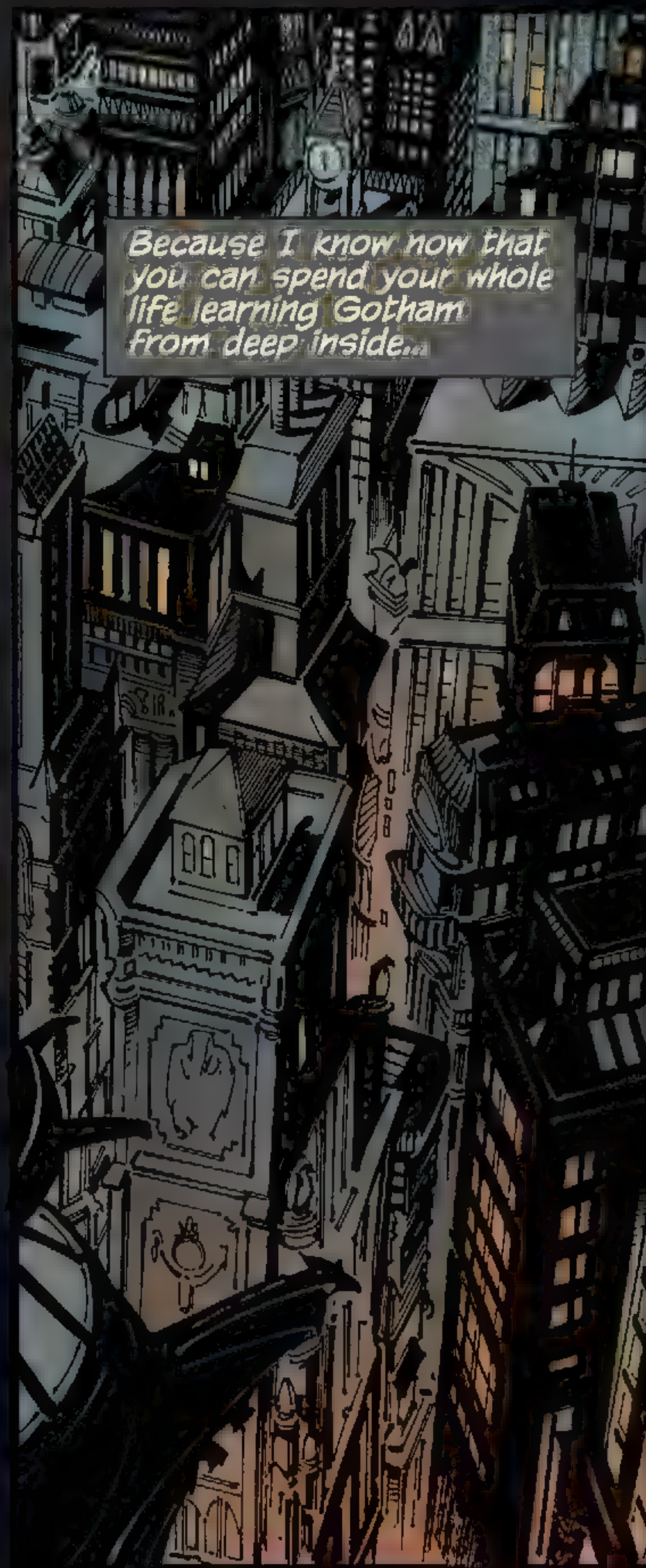
*The hissing rain of sparks
that comes down when
the elevated train passes
overhead on Third Avenue.*



*The late night ticking
of traffic lights.*



*It's only been in the last
few weeks that I've
come to understand
how wrong I've been.*



*Because I know now that
you can spend your whole
life learning Gotham
from deep inside...*

DC COMICS presents BATMAN in

ATTACK ON WAYNE MANOR

SCOTT
SNYDER
writer

GREG
CAPULLO
penciller

JONATHAN
GLAPION
inker

FED PLASCENCIA
colorist

RICHARD STARKINGS
lettering

...and still
know *nothing*
about it at all.





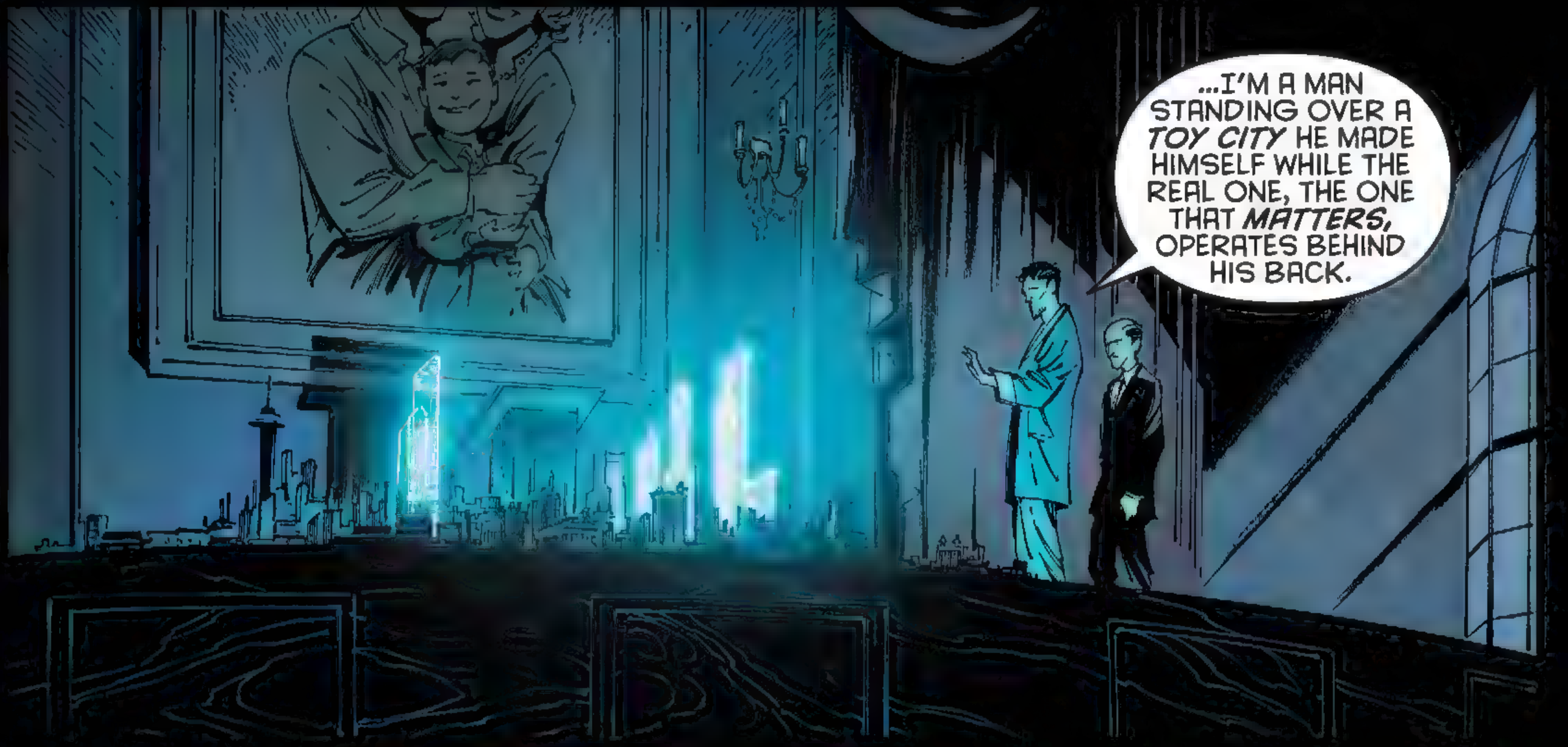
SHUT IT OFF,
ALFRED.
IT'S
HURTING MY
EYES.



IF YOU WISH,
SIR. BUT THEY SAY
LOW-LEVEL LASER
ILLUMINATION CAN BE
THERAPEUTIC FOR
EYE INJURIES.



YOU WANT A
METAPHOR, OLD
FRIEND, HERE'S
ONE...



...I'M A MAN
STANDING OVER A
TOY CITY HE MADE
HIMSELF WHILE THE
REAL ONE, THE ONE
THAT *MATTERS*,
OPERATES BEHIND
HIS BACK.

I WASN'T TRADING IN
WORDPLAY, SIR. YOU'VE
BEEN SITTING IN THE
DARK FOR HOURS.

AND YOU HAVE
INFLAMMATION IN
MOST OF THE TISSUE
AROUND YOUR EYES
AND A CONJUNCTIVAL
HEMORRHAGE IN--



I'VE
BEEN A FOOL,
ALFRED.

AN
ARROGANT
FOOL.



PERHAPS.
BUT THEN YOU COME
FROM A *LONG LINE*
OF SUCH MEN, SIR.
AND THAT CITY ACROSS
THE BAY IS A BETTER
PLACE FOR ALL OF
THEIR ARROGANT
FOOLISHNESS.



AND IF YOU--

THUMP



SIR--

I HEARD IT. SOMEONE'S TRYING TO GET IN.



GET TO THE CAVE. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE INTRUDER.

BUT SIR, I CAN--

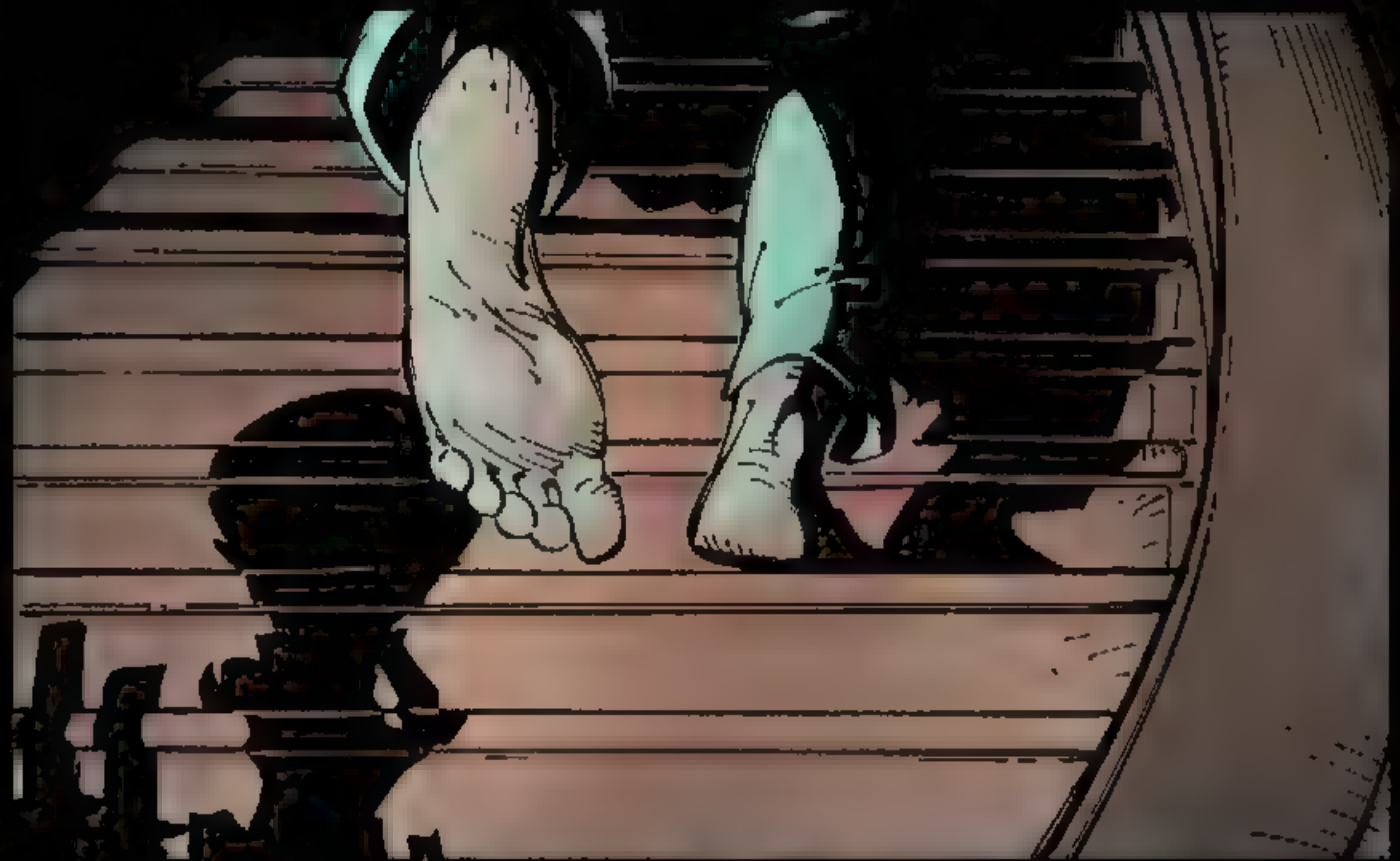


I HAVE THE EARPiece AND LENS.

HELP ME FROM DOWN THERE.



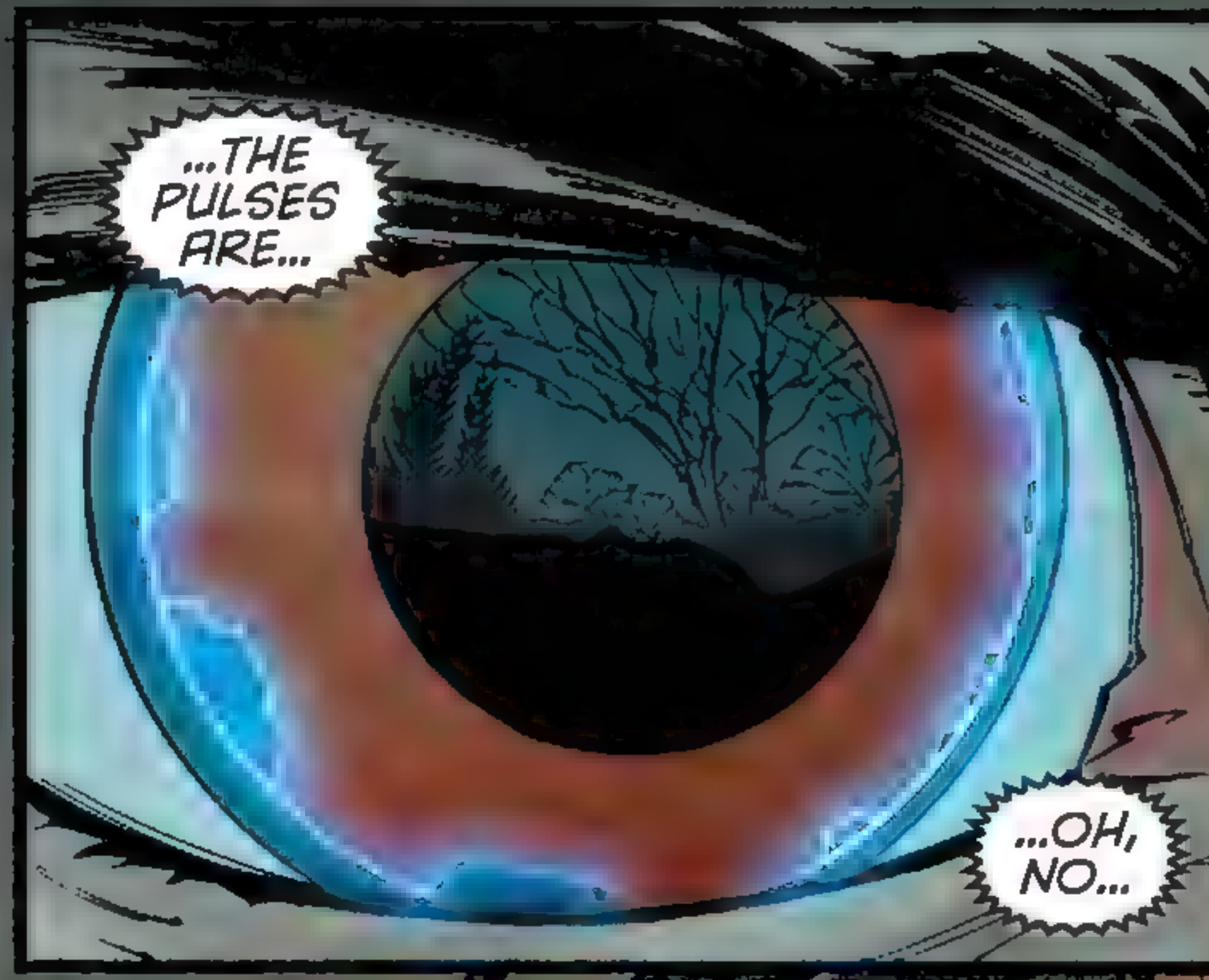
GO!





SIR, I'M IN POSITION.

I'M PICKING UP INTRUDER SIGNALS ALL AROUND THE MANOR, BUT THEY'RE NOT MAKING SENSE...



...THE PULSES ARE...

...OH, NO...



MASTER BRUCE, YOU MUST GET DOWN HERE!

MASTER BRUCE!

CRASH



BRUCE WAYNE...

...THE COURT OF OWLS...

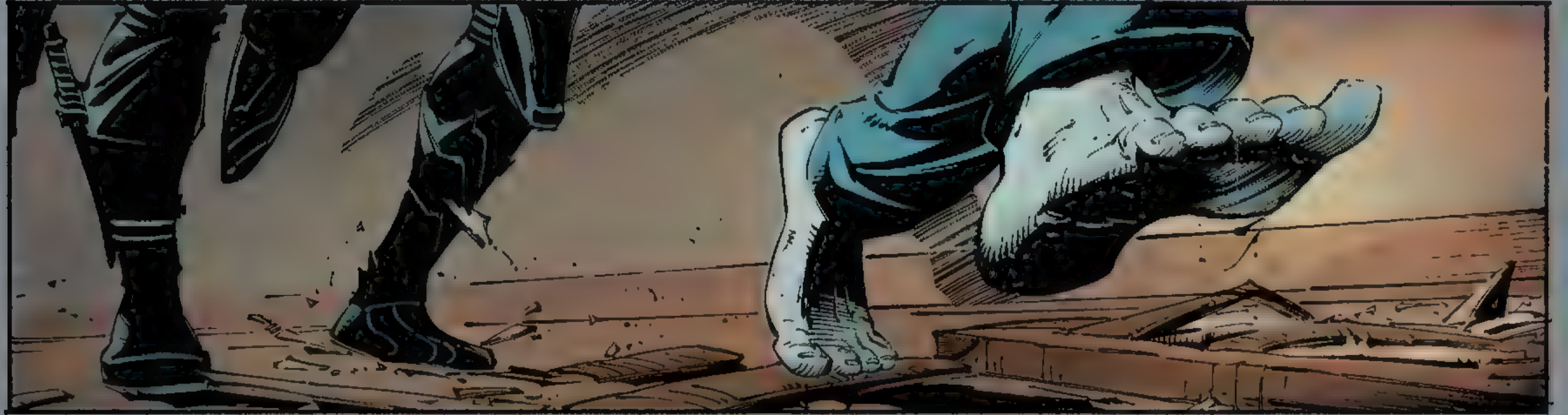
...HAS SENTENCED YOU TO...

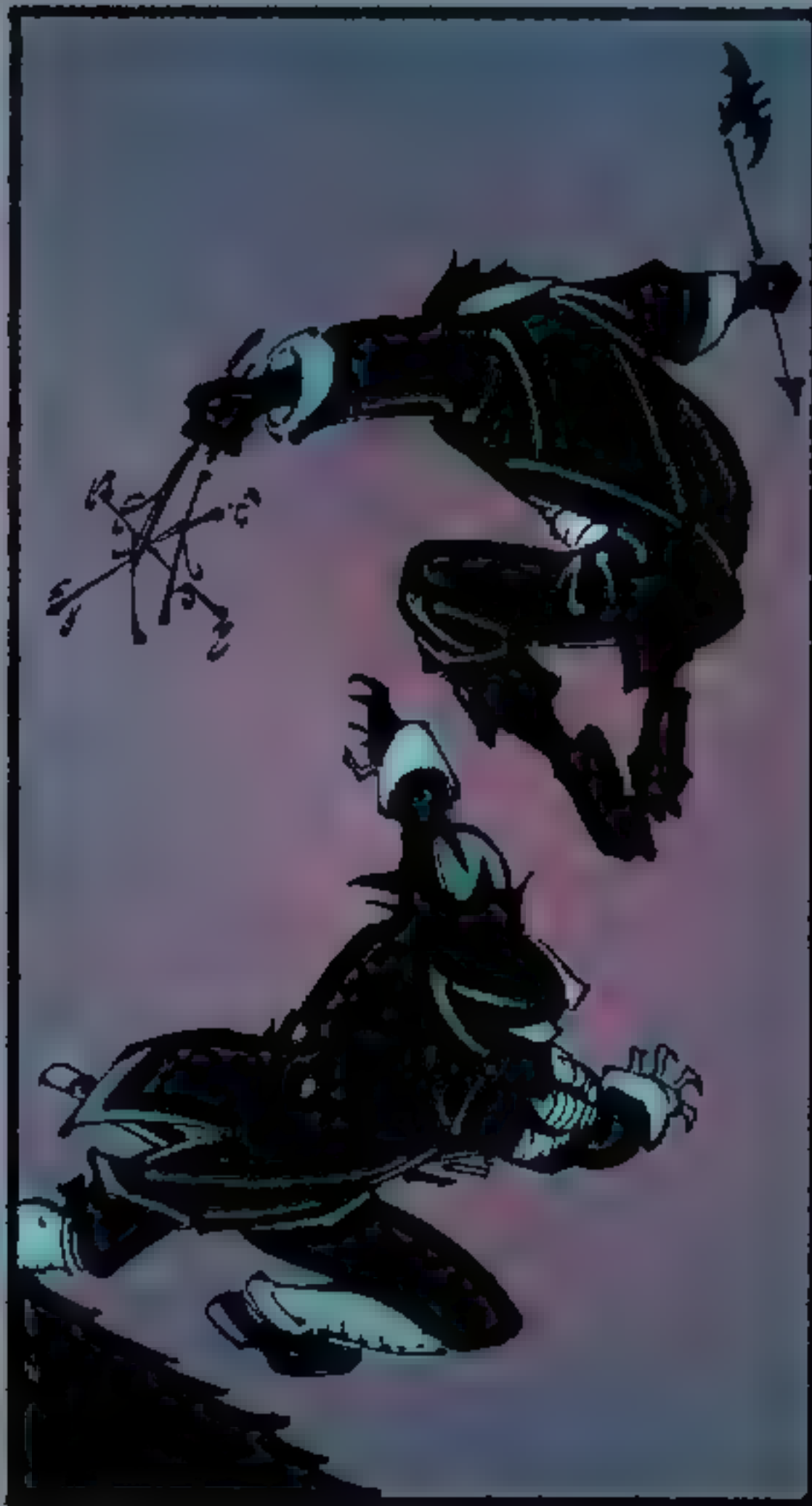
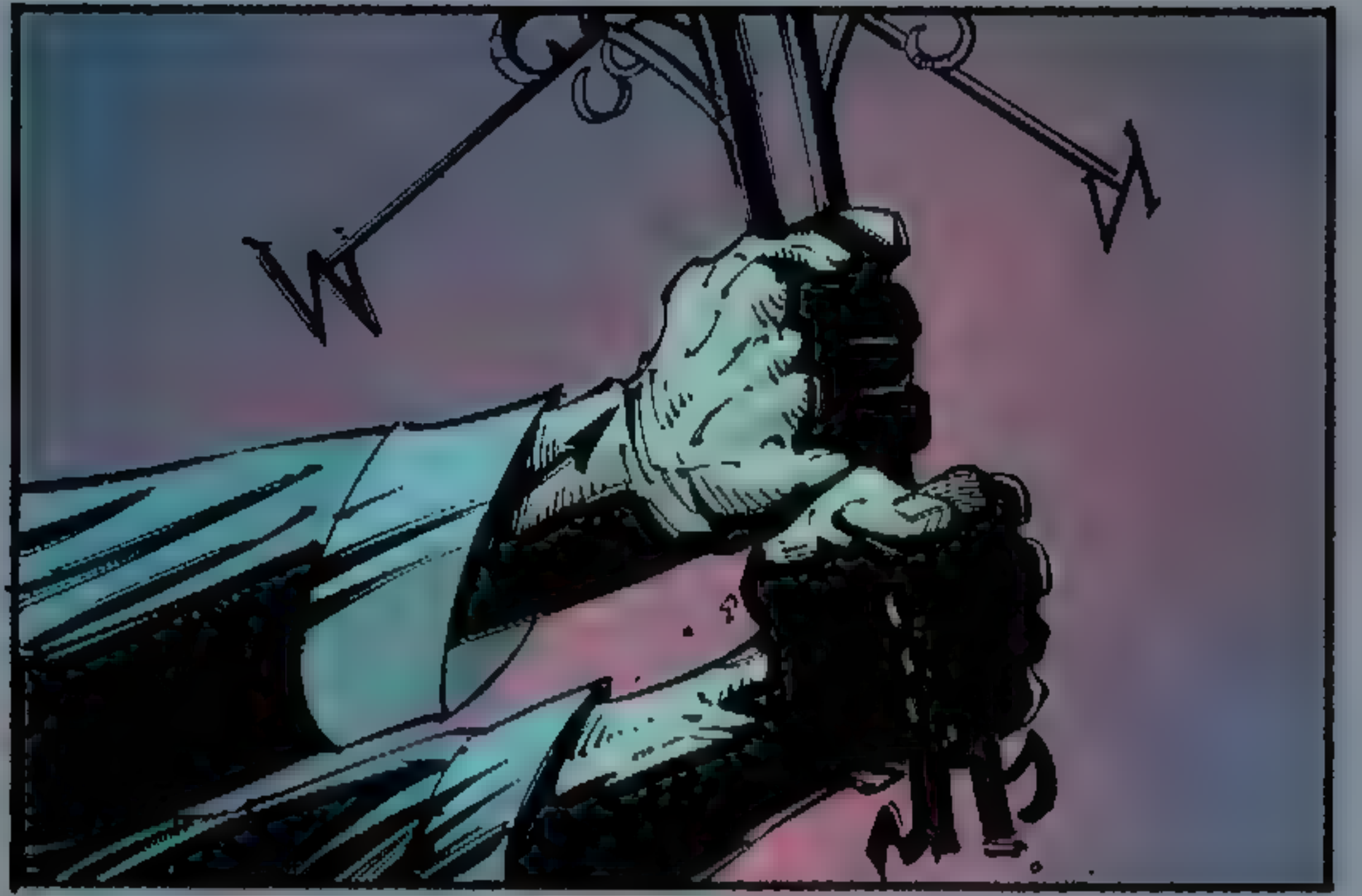
CRACK

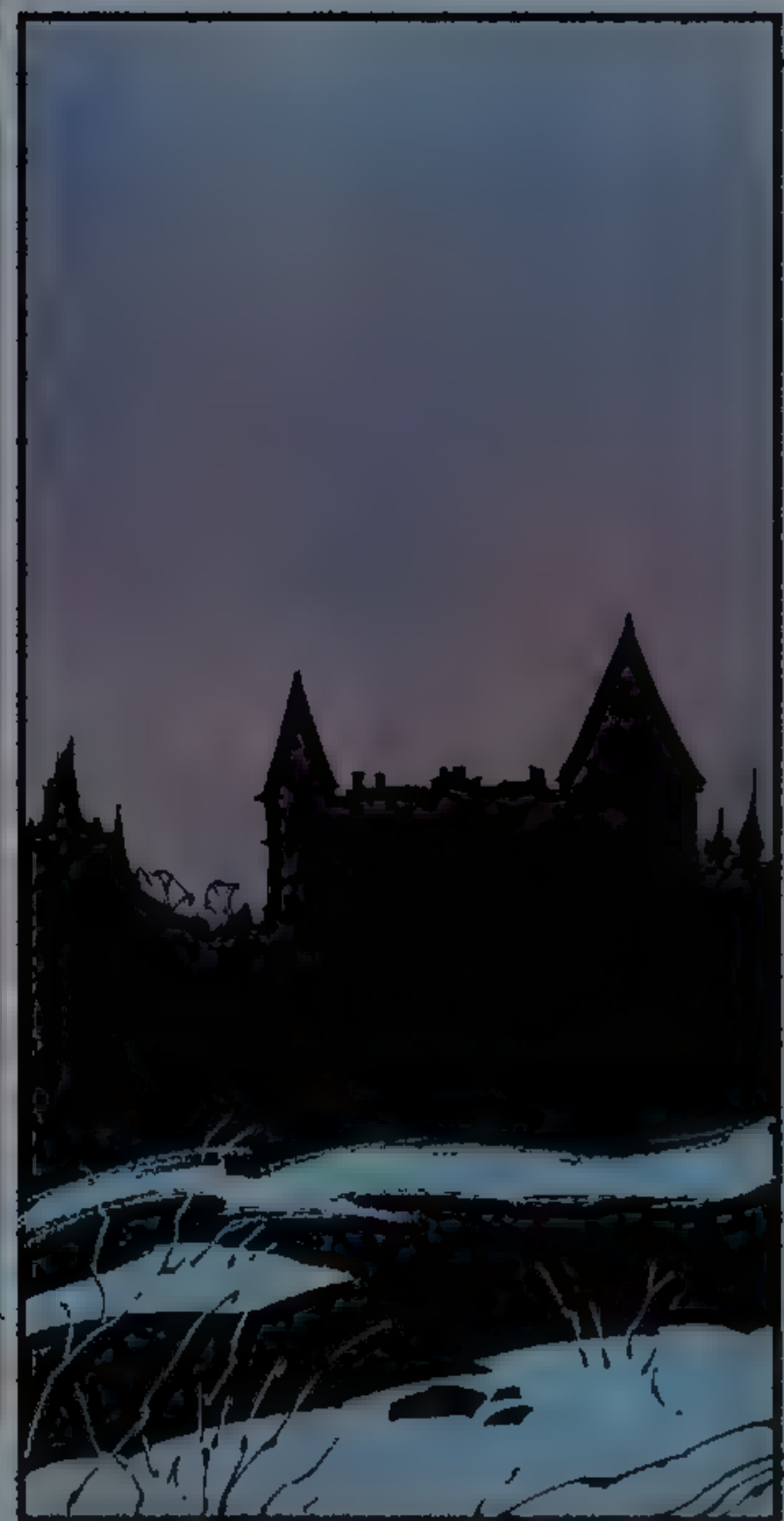
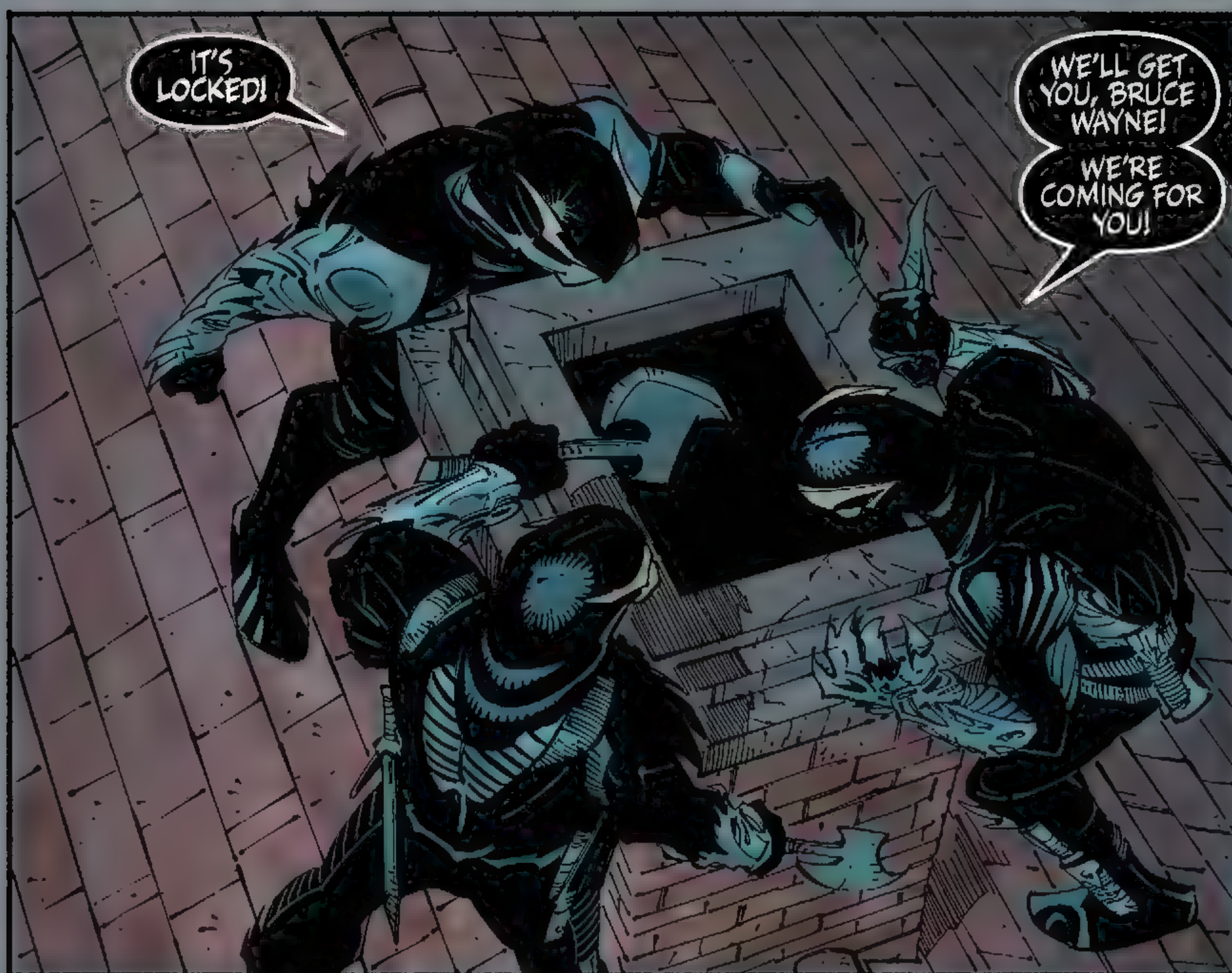
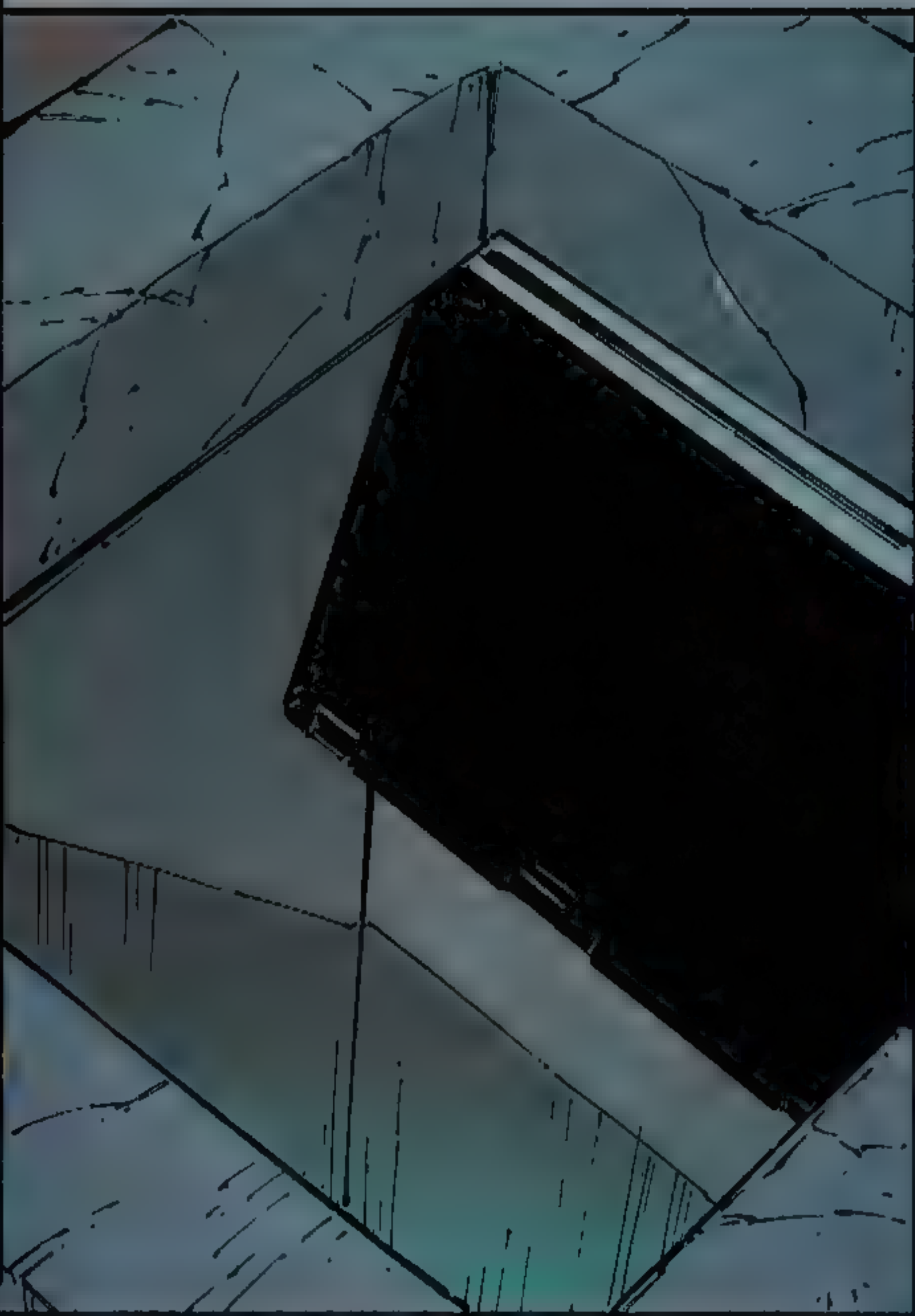
YEAH, I GOT IT THE FIRST TIME!













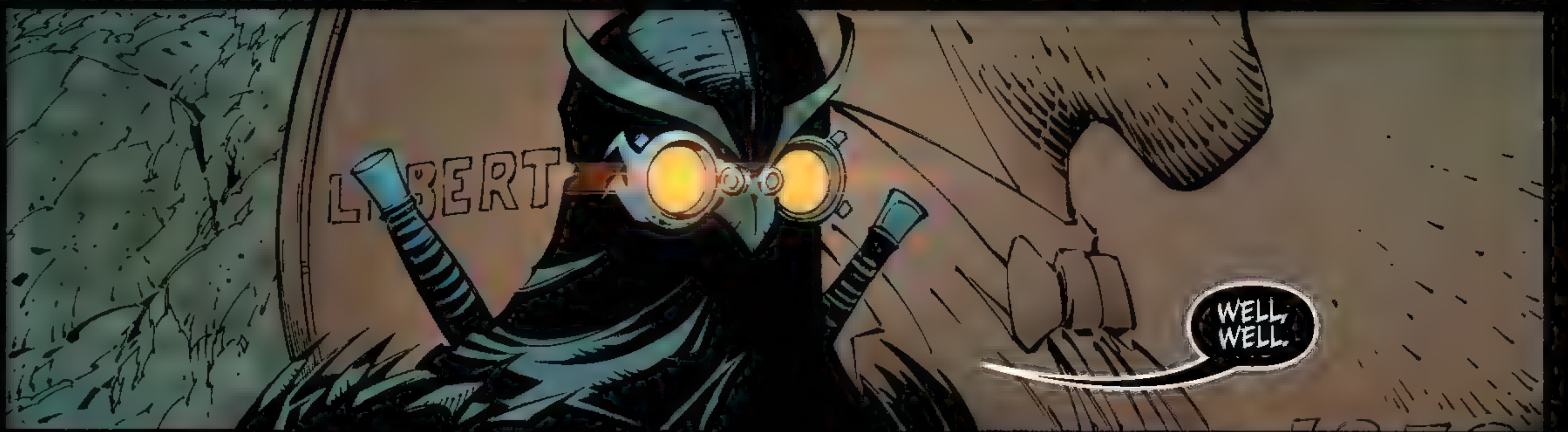
You should have seen this coming.

You should have been watching for it.

Not lost in your own head.

Stupid, Bruce, Stupid.

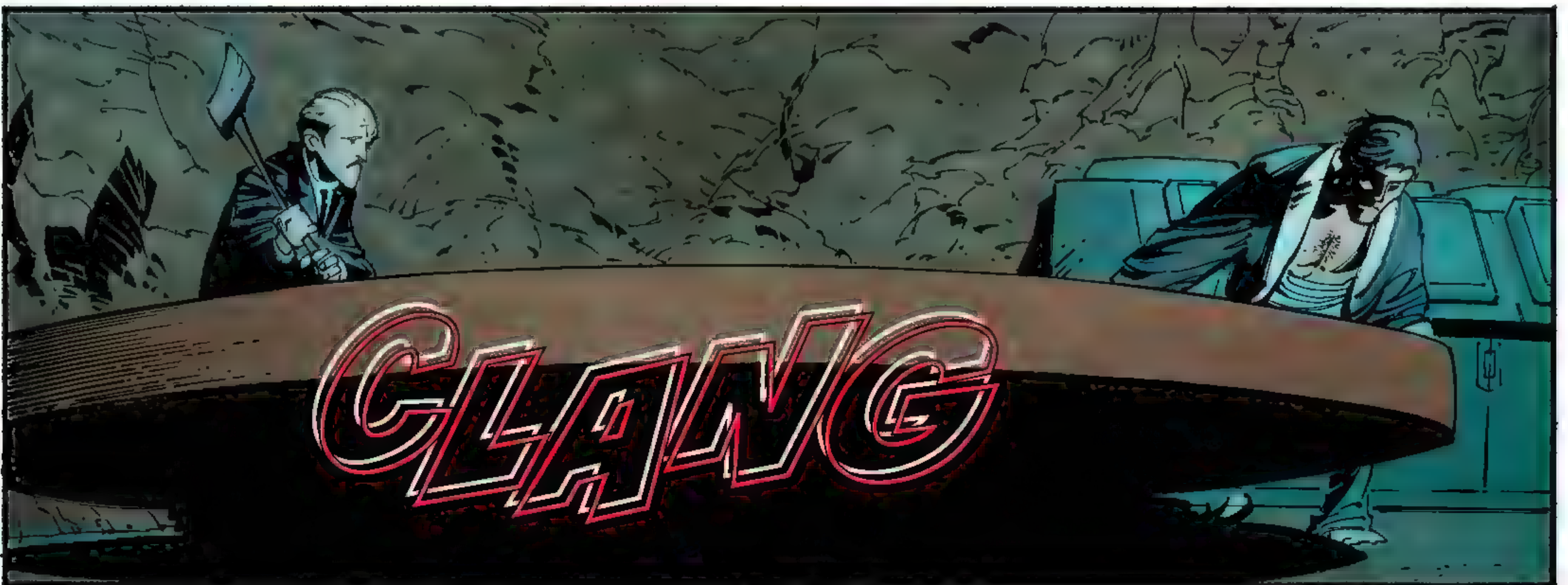
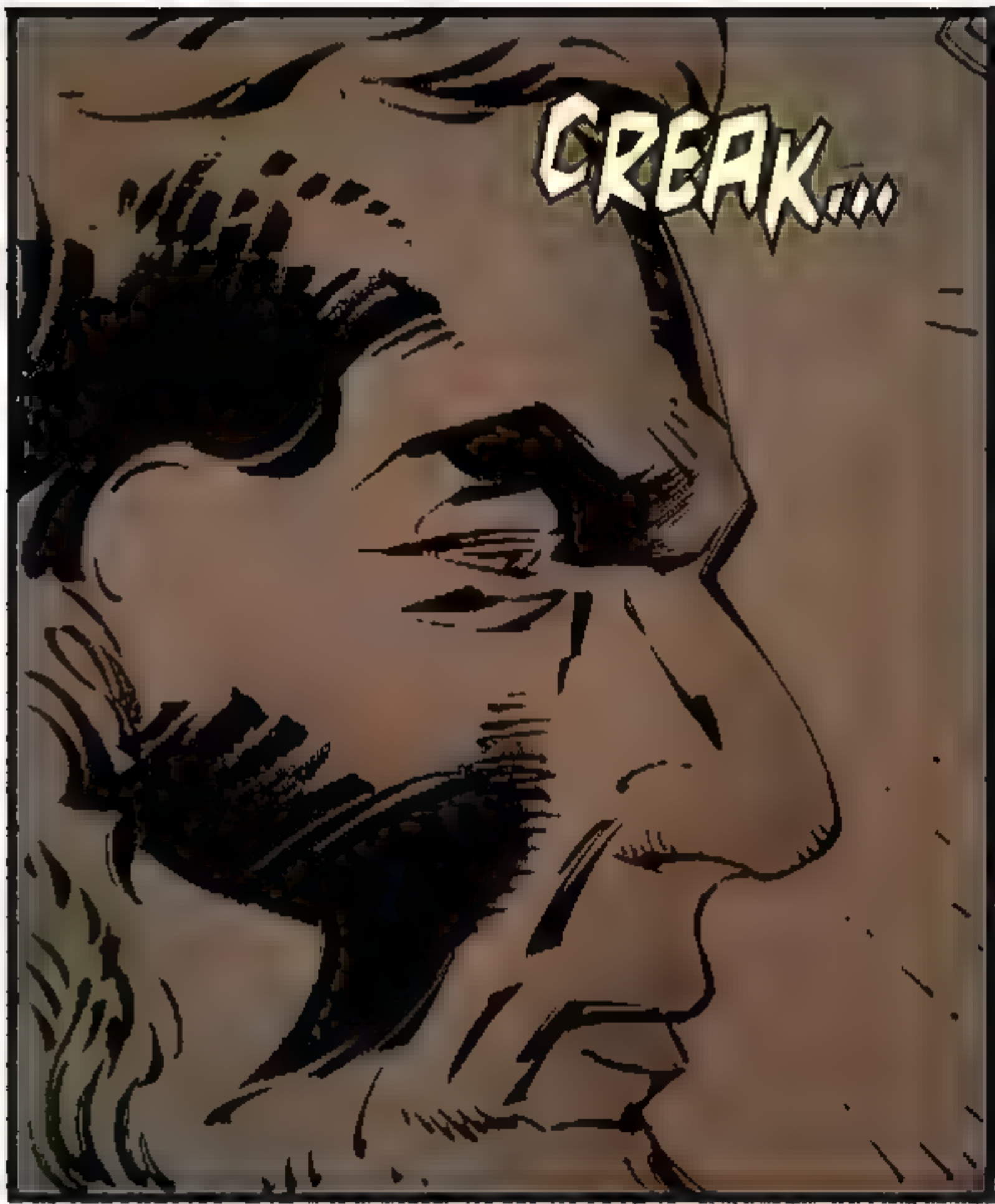
ALFRED!
ALFRED, ARE YOU ALL RI--



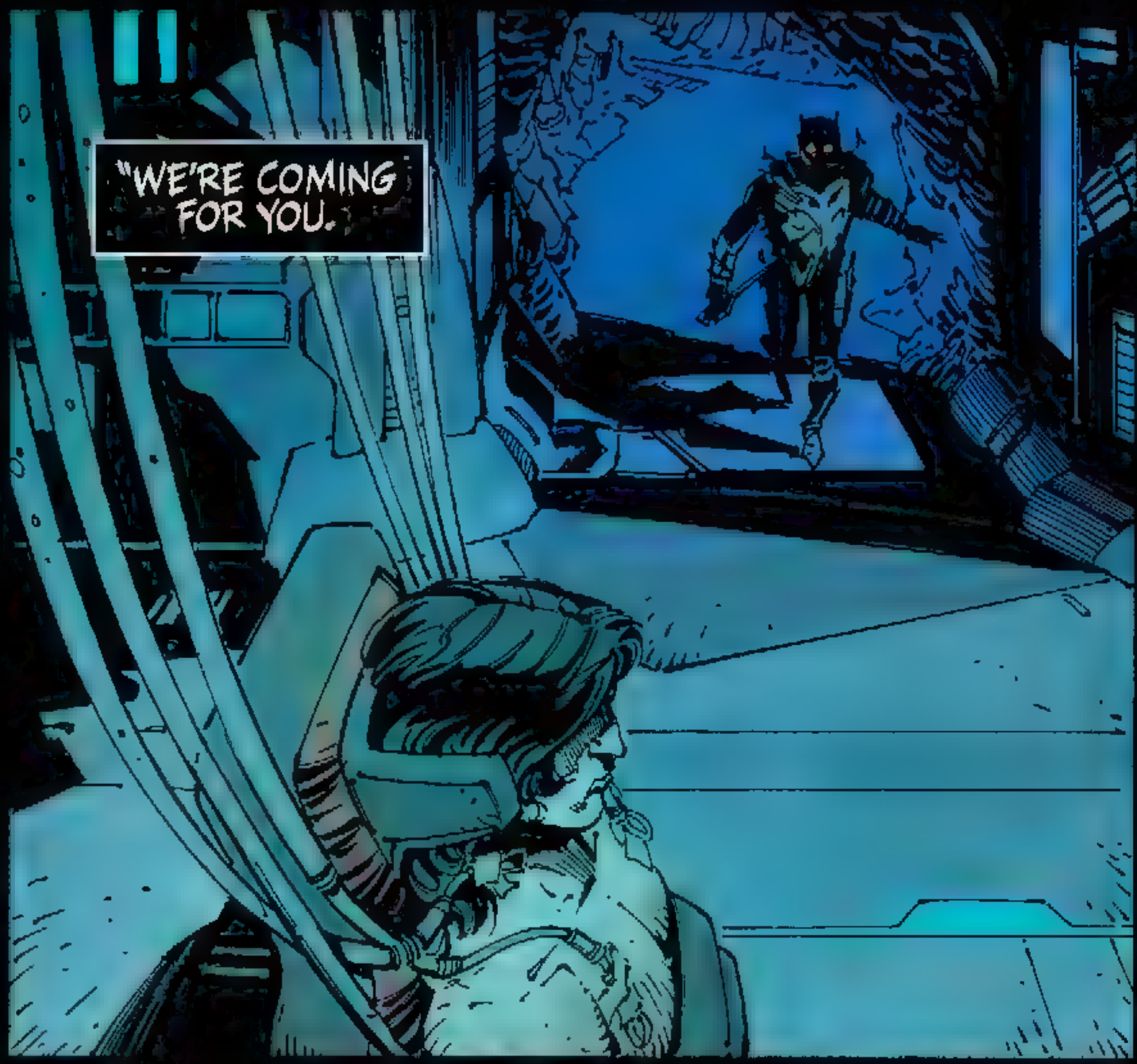
WELL, WELL.



SEEMS YOU HAVE A SECRET, BRUCE. DON'T YOU?



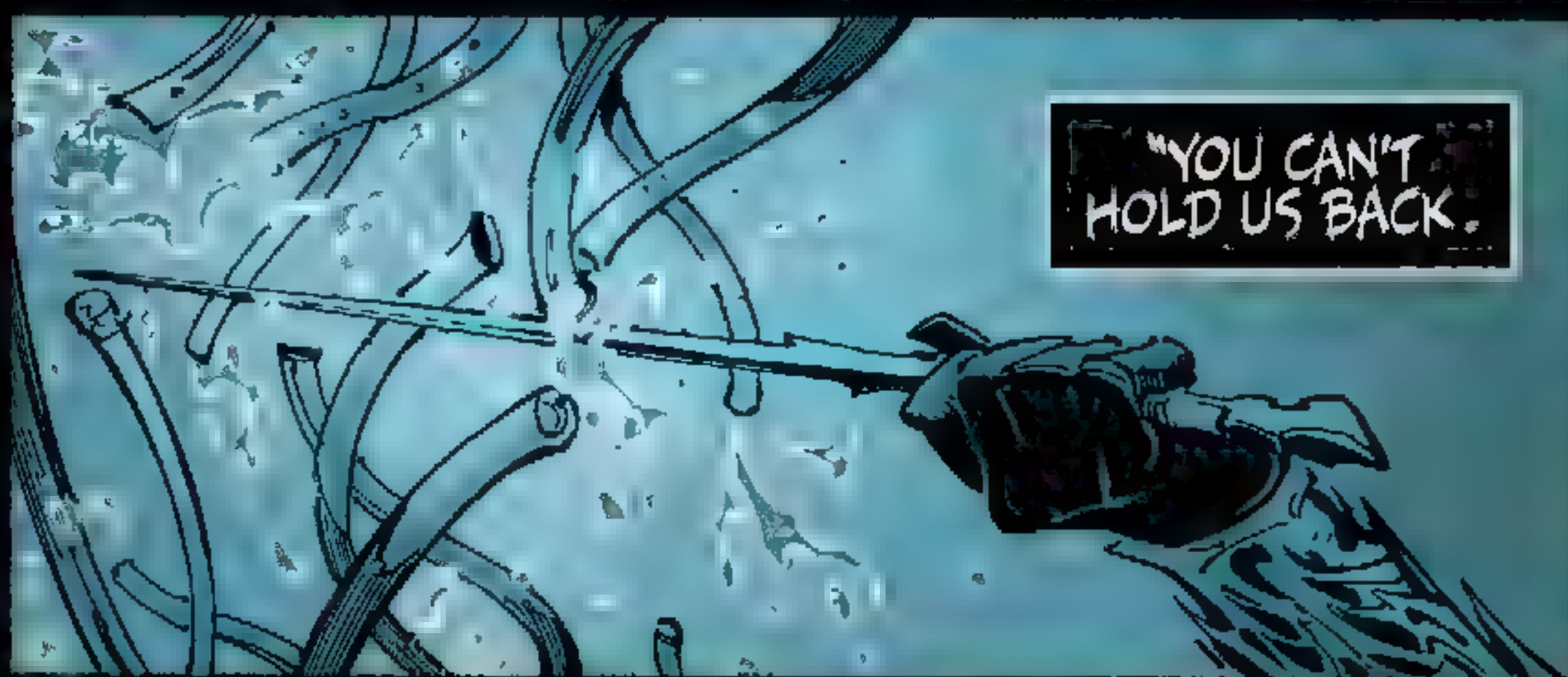




"WE'RE COMING FOR YOU."



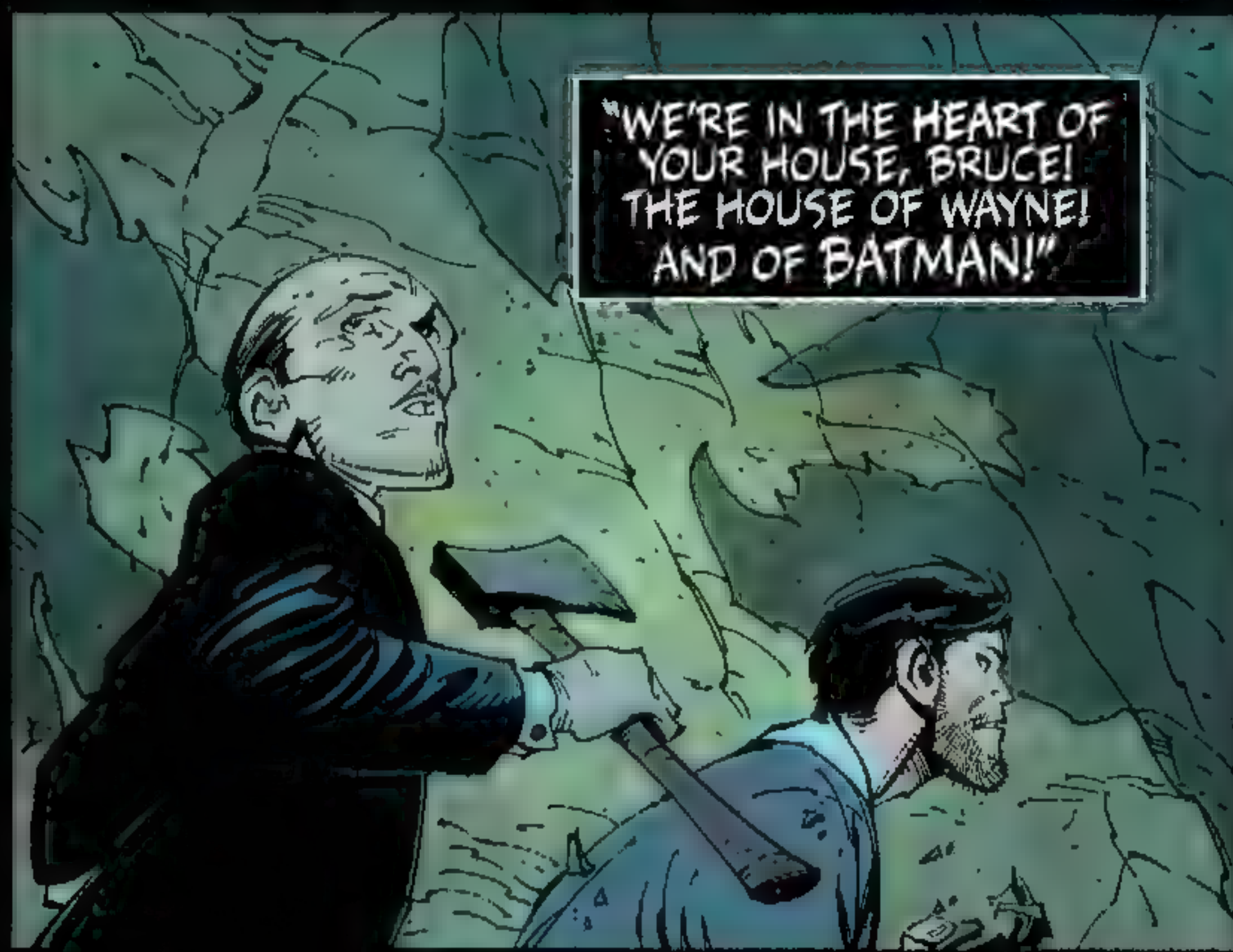
"YOU CAN'T STOP THE COURT."



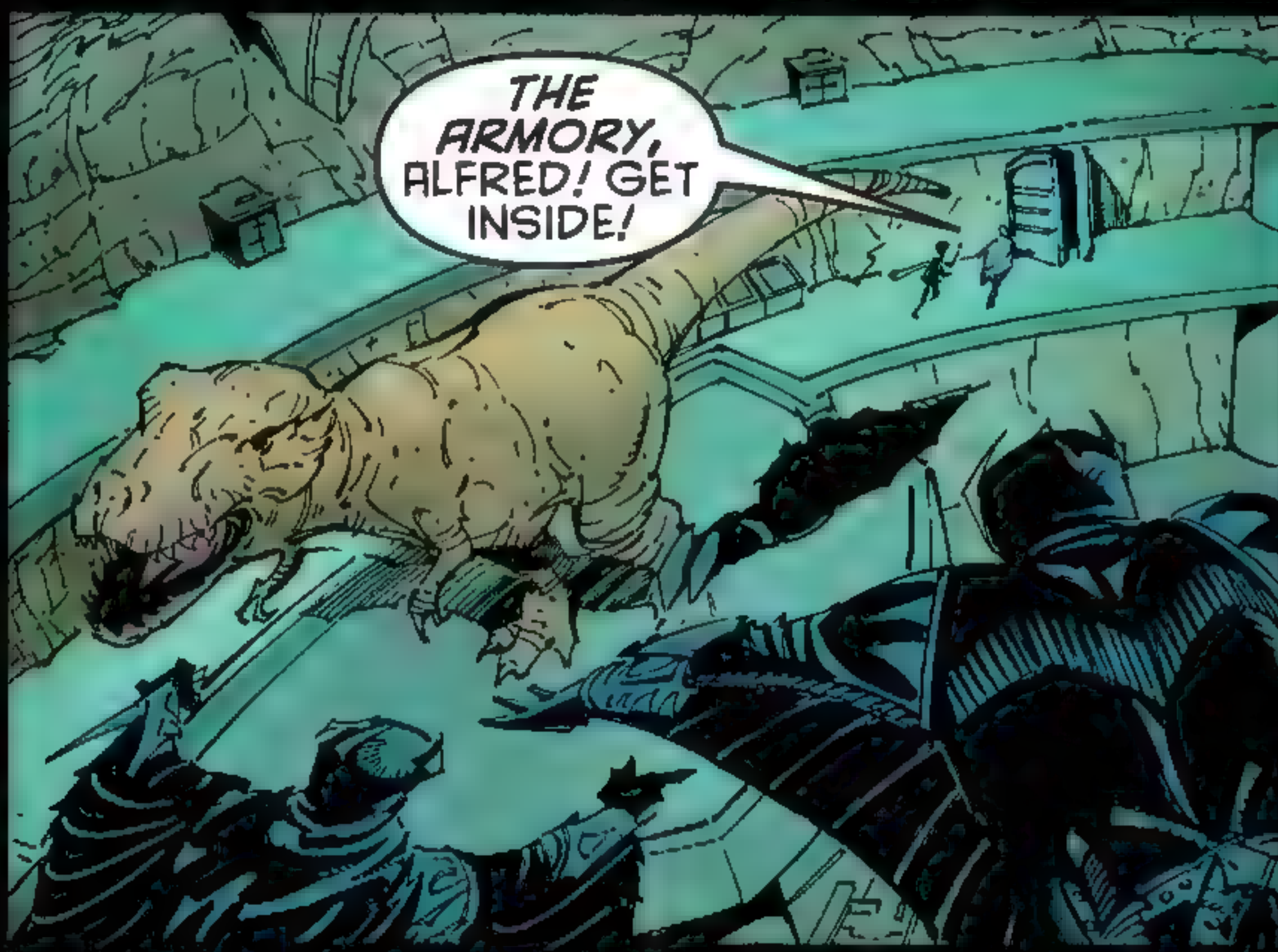
"YOU CAN'T HOLD US BACK."



"THERE'S NOWHERE TO RUN ANYMORE."



"WE'RE IN THE HEART OF YOUR HOUSE, BRUCE! THE HOUSE OF WAYNE! AND OF BATMAN!"



"THE ARMORY, ALFRED! GET INSIDE!"



"SIR--"

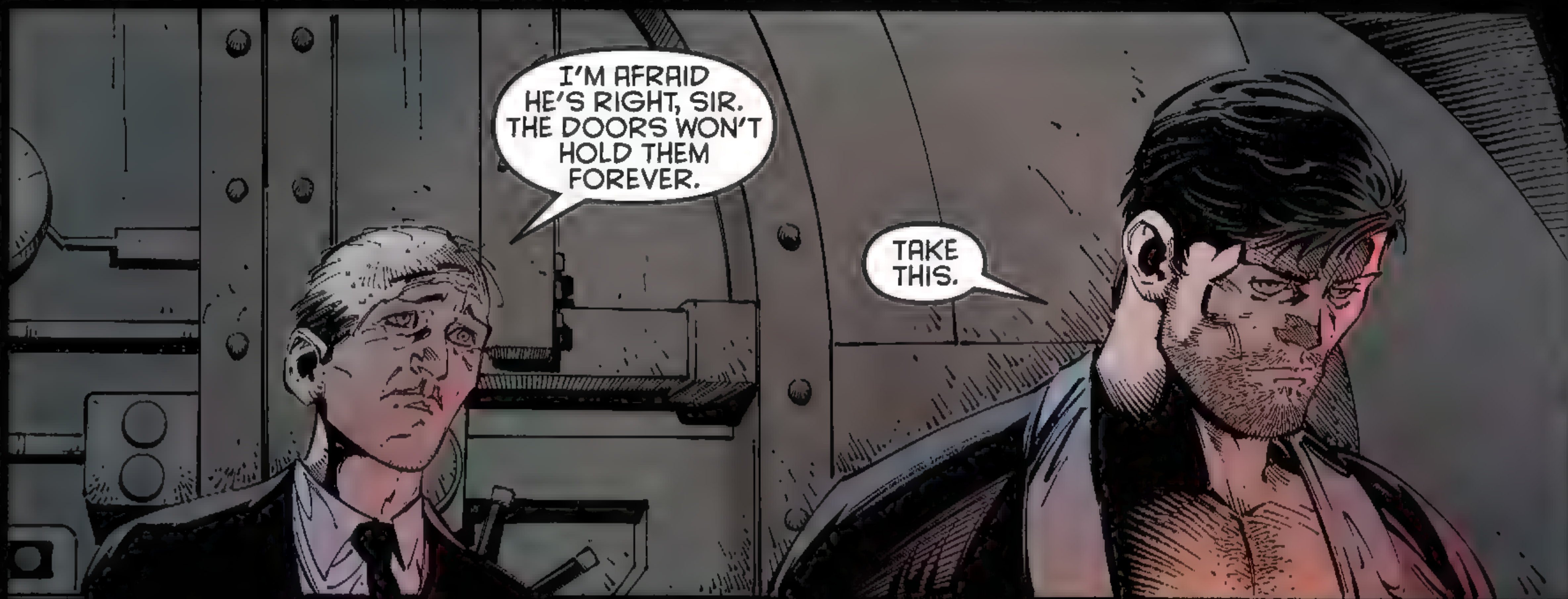
"QUICKLY!"



"THAT'S OKAY, BRUCE. WE'LL FIND A WAY IN."



"WE ALWAYS DO."

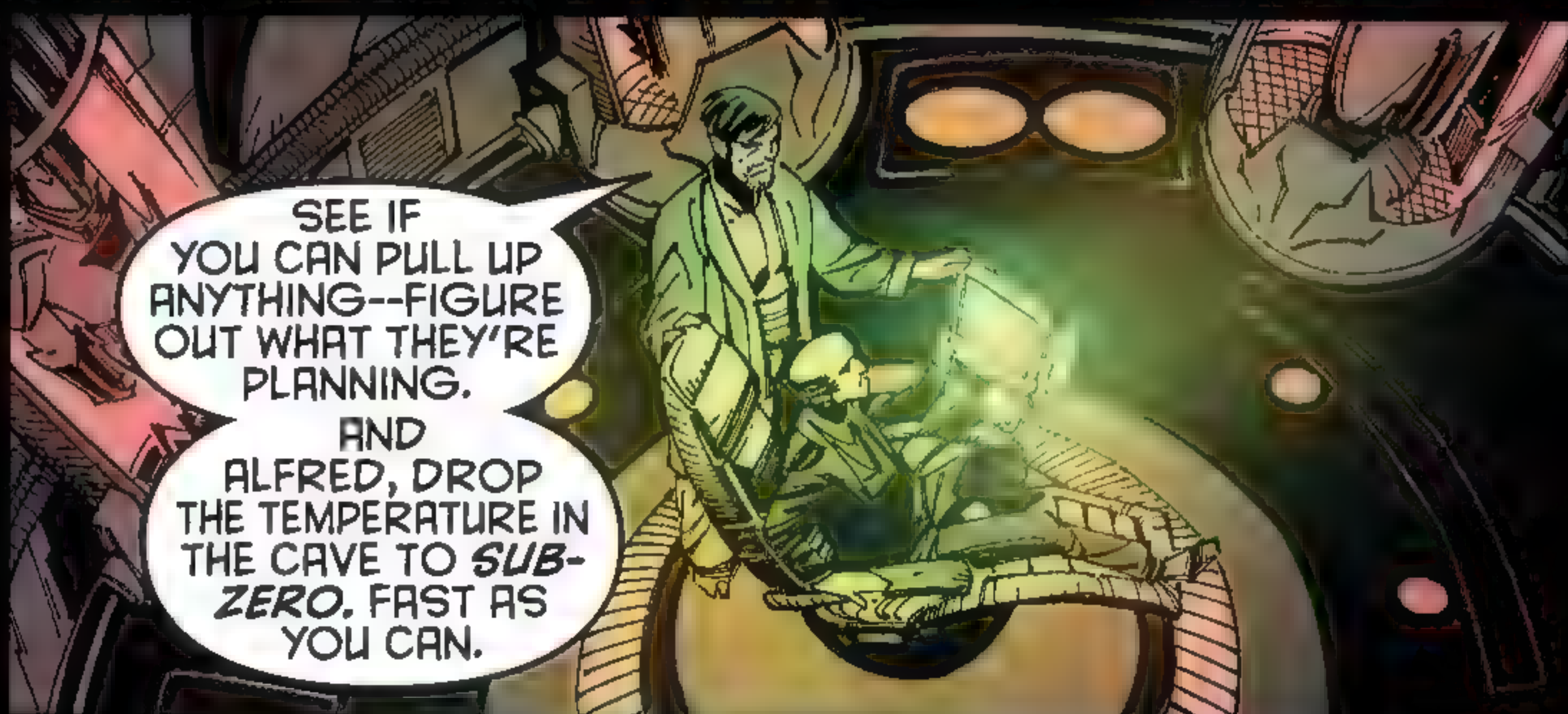


I'M AFRAID
HE'S RIGHT, SIR.
THE DOORS WON'T
HOLD THEM
FOREVER.

TAKE
THIS.

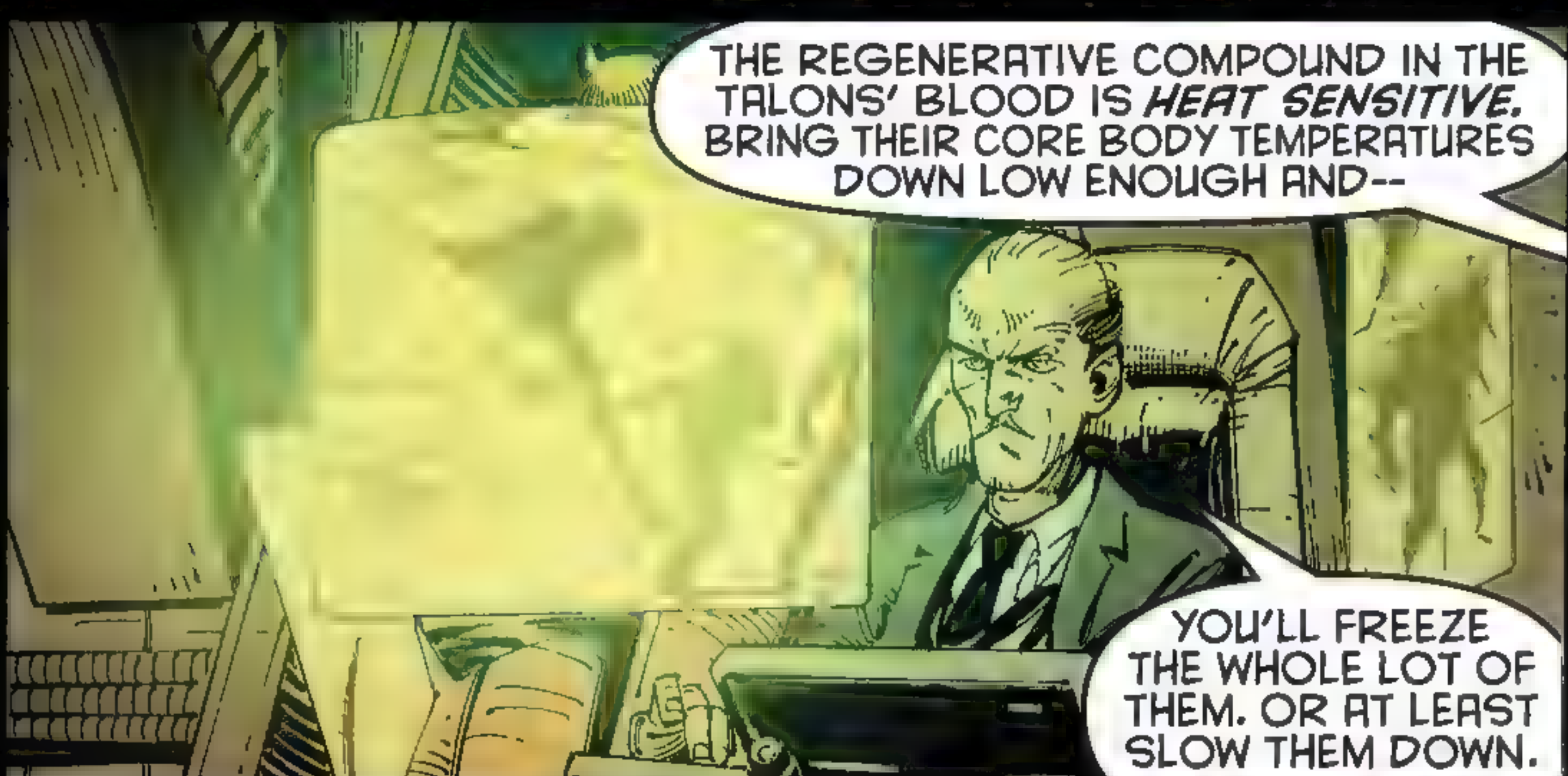


IT'S
SOME KIND OF
MICRODRIVE. IT WAS
IN THE TALON'S
GAUNTLET.



SEE IF
YOU CAN PULL UP
ANYTHING--FIGURE
OUT WHAT THEY'RE
PLANNING.

AND
ALFRED, DROP
THE TEMPERATURE IN
THE CAVE TO *SUB-
ZERO*. FAST AS
YOU CAN.



THE REGENERATIVE COMPOUND IN THE
TALONS' BLOOD IS *HEAT SENSITIVE*.
BRING THEIR CORE BODY TEMPERATURES
DOWN LOW ENOUGH AND--

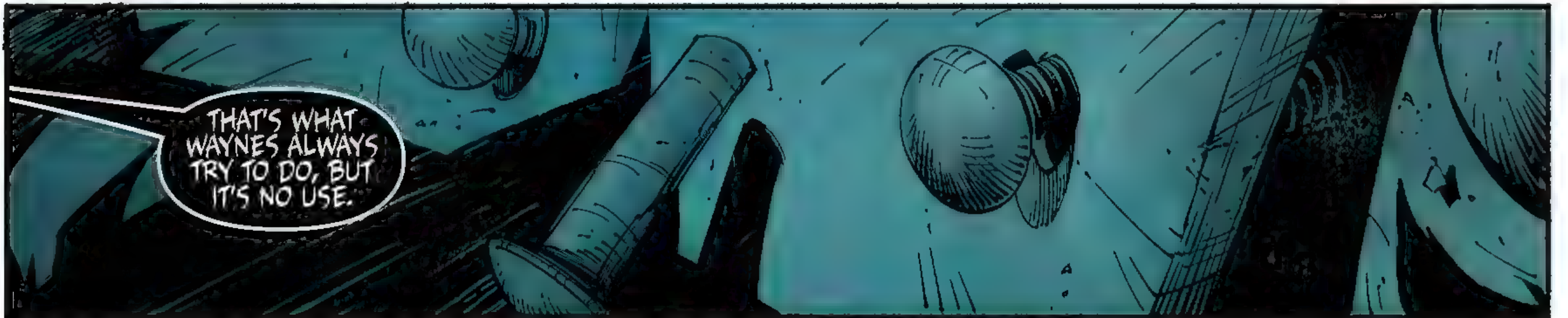
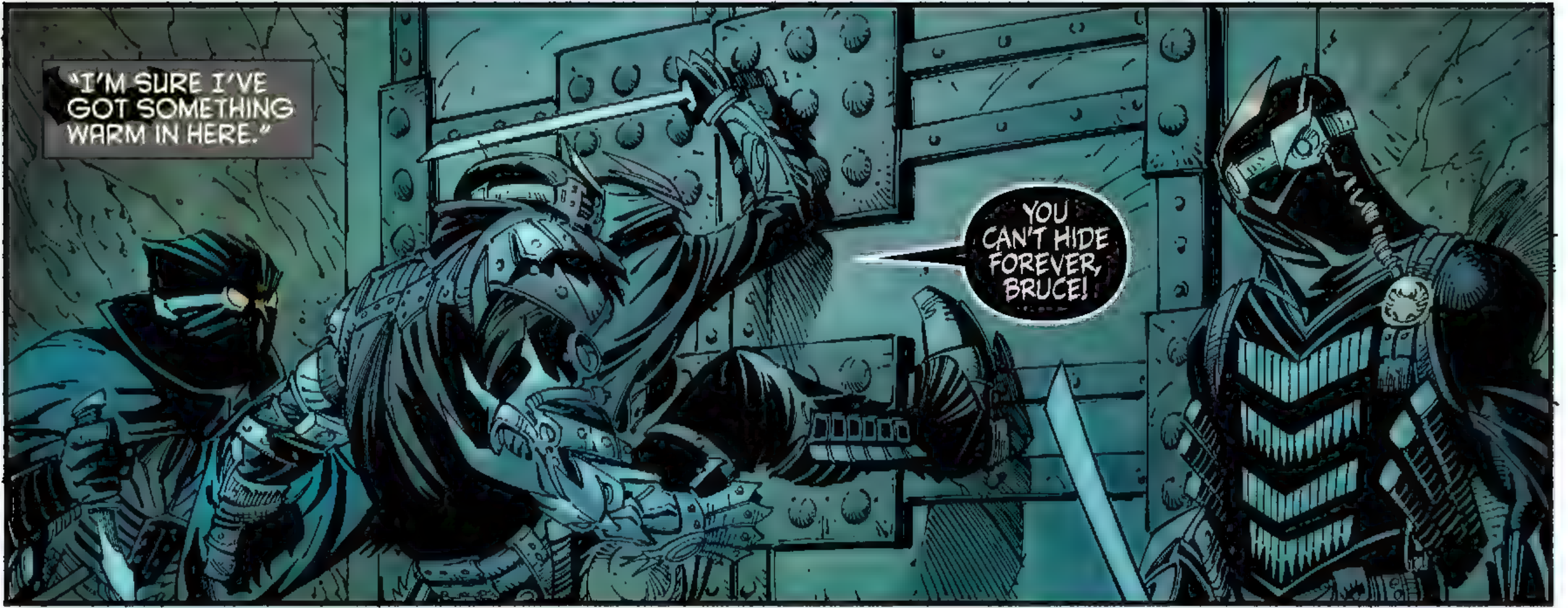
YOU'LL FREEZE
THE WHOLE LOT OF
THEM. OR AT LEAST
SLOW THEM DOWN.



BUT SIR, THAT WILL TAKE
MINUTES. AND IN THE
MEANTIME, THEY'LL *TEAR
YOU APART*.

BESIDES, THE
TEMPERATURE IN THE
CAVE WILL BECOME
INHOSPITABLE TO
YOU YOURSELF IN A
MATTER OF--

DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT ME,
ALFRED.





NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 7:32 PM...

LOOK
AT THIS,
FRIENDS.

BRUCE
CAME OUT
TO PLAY!



YOU KNOW
WHAT WE DO TO
BATS, BRUCE? WE
EAT THEM WHOLE.
BONES AND
ALL.

...I'VE
UPLOADED THE
MATERIAL, BUT
THE FIREW--

WAIT.

NOT
IN *THIS*
CAVE YOU
DON'T.

MASTER
BRUCE...





THIS
CAN'T BE
RIGHT.

WHAT IS IT,
ALFRED?



MY
GOD...

ALFRED?



GOATHAM CITY COMPTROLLER -- BETTY PARK
GOATHAM CITY DEPUTY SHERIFF -- MICHAEL D. DAVIS
KANE COUNTY SUPREME COURT JUSTICE -- JAN SPITZ
GOATHAM PUBLIC ADVOCATE -- JOHN LEE
SPEAKER OF THE CITY COUNCIL -- MIGUEL GUADALUPE
HEAD OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION -- BILL KEEF
GOATHAM COMMISSIONER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS -- VALERIE VENDERMAN
GOATHAM CITY POLICE COMMISSIONER -- JIM GORDON
52ND ADJUTANT GENERAL OF GOTHAM -- MAJ. GEN. BENJAMIN BURROWS
ARHAM ASYLUM HEAD AND DIRECTOR -- JEREMIAH ARHAM
GOATHAM CITY MAYOR -- SEBASTIAN HADY
DEPUTY MAYOR -- THOMAS HAVANAUGH
COUNCILMAN -- RANDAL DAVIS
GOATHAM CITY CANDIDATE -- LINCOLN MARCH
SCIENTIST -- VICTOR PRIES
GOATHAM CITY FOX
GOATHAM CITY LOUNGE -- OSWALD

IT'S
A LIST,
SIR.

A LIST OF
WHAT?

IT'S A LIST OF
TARGETS.

AND...
NEARLY EVERY
PUBLIC FIGURE
IN GOTHAM
CITY IS ON
IT.

"EVERYONE WHO
SHAPES THE CITY."



"THE CITY
COMPTROLLER..."



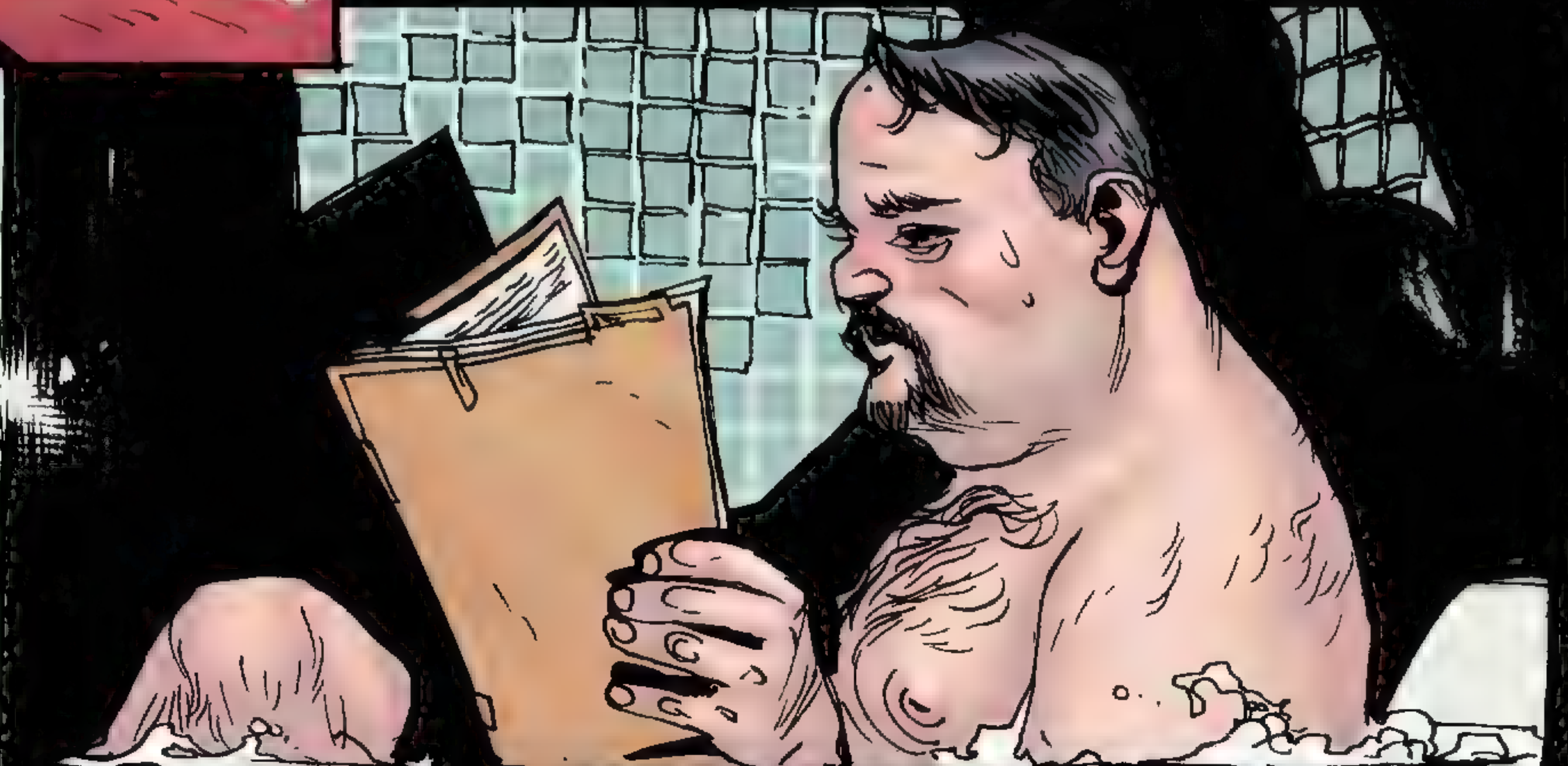
BETTY
PARK...



"GOTHAM CITY DEPUTY SHERIFF..."



MICHAEL D. DAVIS...



PLEASE DON'T...

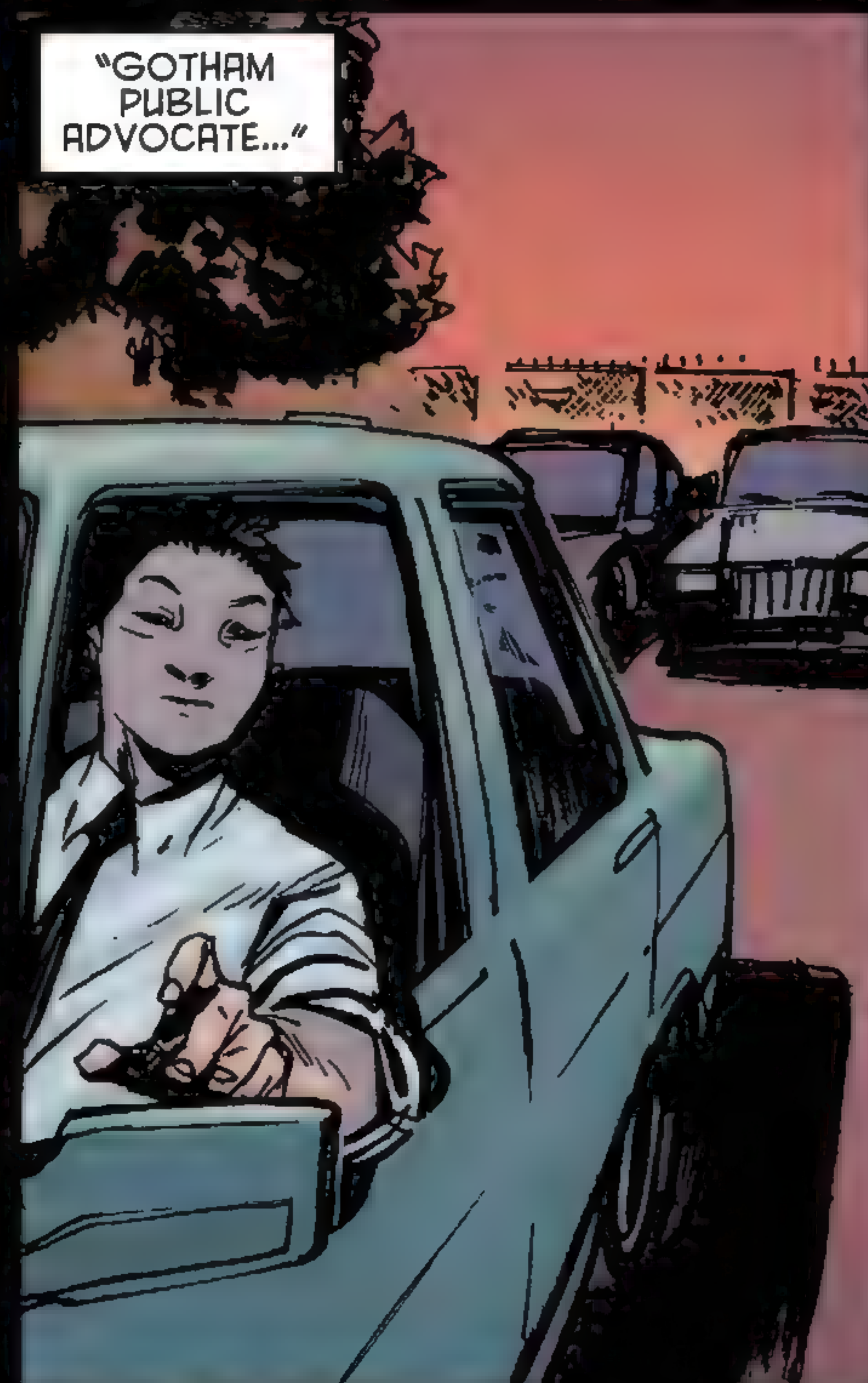




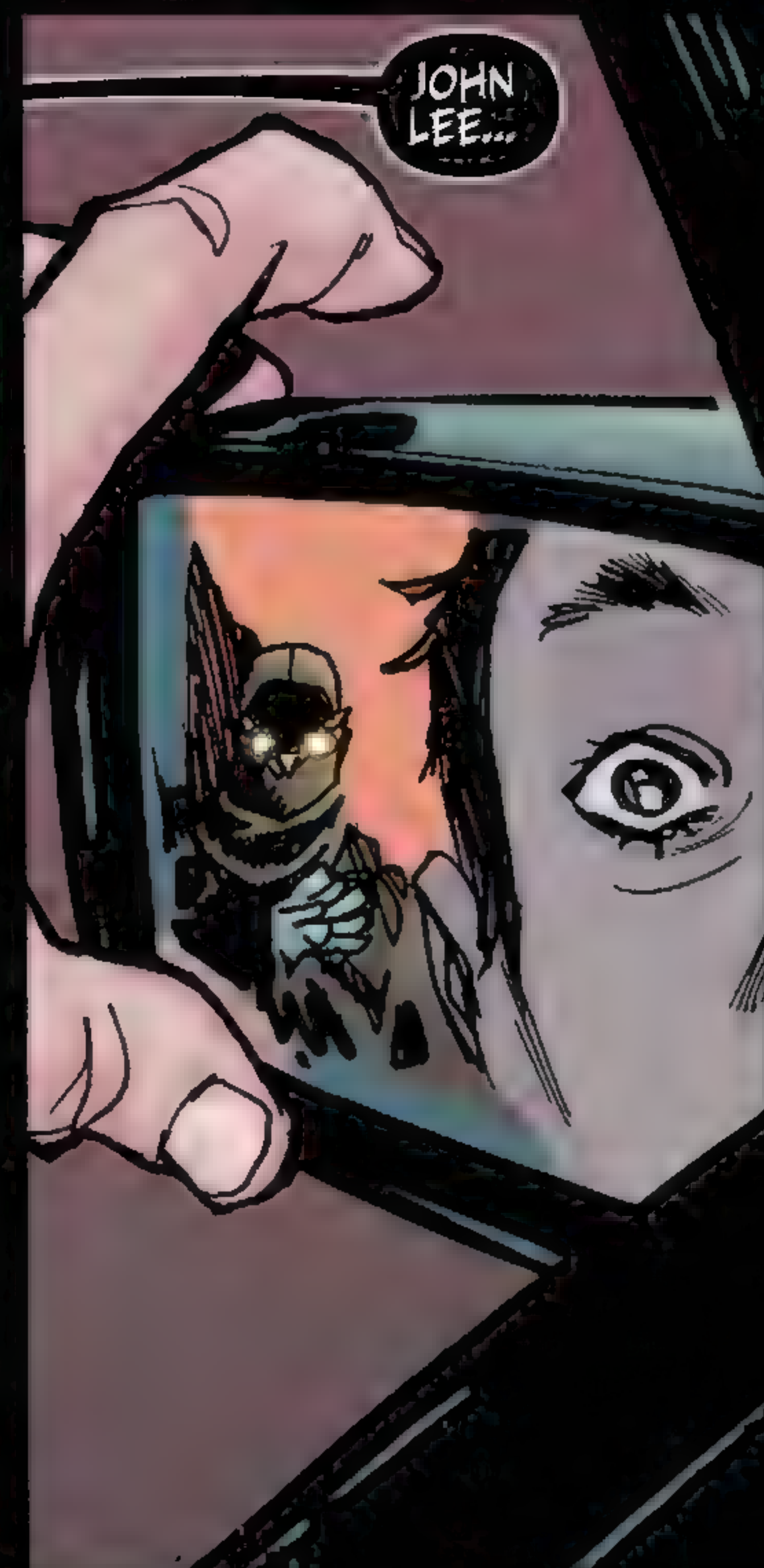
"KANE COUNTY
SUPREME COURT
JUSTICE..."



JAN
SPITZ...



"GOTHAM
PUBLIC
ADVOCATE..."



JOHN
LEE...



"SPEAKER
OF THE CITY
COUNCIL..."

MIGUEL
GUADALUPE...



"THE HEAD OF THE
CITY PLANNING
COMMISSION..."

BILL
KEEP...



"GOTHAM'S
COMMISSIONER
OF CULTURAL
AFFAIRS..."

VALERIE
VENDERMAN.
THE COURT OF
OWLS...



...HAS
SENTENCED
YOU...



...TO DIE.



COMMISSIONER GORDON... MAYOR HADY... THEY'RE GOING TO KILL THEM ALL.

PUT OUT THE CALL, ALFRED.

ALFRED!

PROHIBITOR OF THE ICEBERG CASINO AND LOBBYING
CEC OF WAKNE ENTERPRISES -- LINDA PRICE
PREMIER GOVAM SCIENTIST -- VICTOR PRICE
GOVAM CITY MAYORAL CANDIDATE -- LINCOLN WAKNE
GOVAM CITY COUNCILMAN -- ZIVAD JAGNAR
GOVAM CITY DEPUTY MAYOR -- THOMAS KAWANAH
GOVAM CITY MAYOR -- YOAH WAITZABEE



I'M HERE, SIR.

PUT THE CALL OUT TO THE FAMILY.

NOW.



YES... YES OF COURSE, SIR.



PUTTING IT OUT NOW.



TONIGHT, THE COURT OF OWLS HAS SENT THEIR ASSASSINS TO KILL NEARLY FORTY PEOPLE ACROSS THE CITY.

THE COURT'S TARGETS ARE ALL GOTHAM LEADERS, PEOPLE WHO SHAPE THIS CITY.

I HAVE UPLOADED A LIST OF THE TARGETS' NAMES, HERE.

THE COURT'S ASSASSINS, THE "TALONS," ARE ALREADY EN ROUTE TO THEIR TARGETS.

...I SEND THIS WITH THE GREATEST URGENCY.

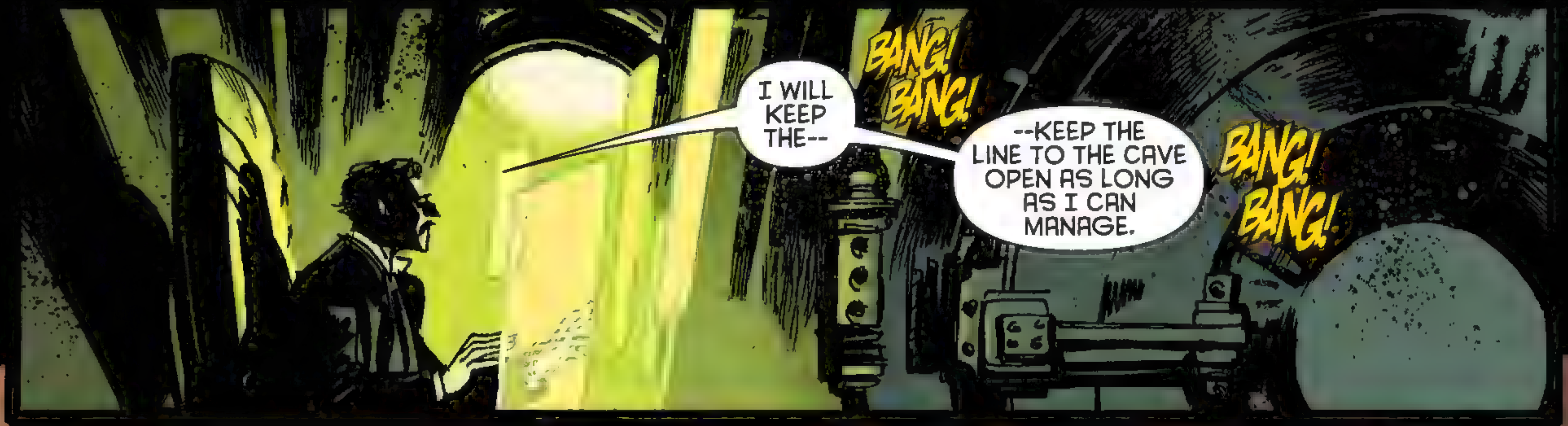
TO ALL THE ALLIES OF THE BAT PRESENTLY IN GOTHAM...

THEY ARE HIGHLY TRAINED KILLERS--

--WITH EXTRAORDINARY REGENERATIVE ABILITIES.

FOR MANY OF THEIR TARGETS, I FEAR IT MAY BE TOO LATE TO--

BANG!
BANG!



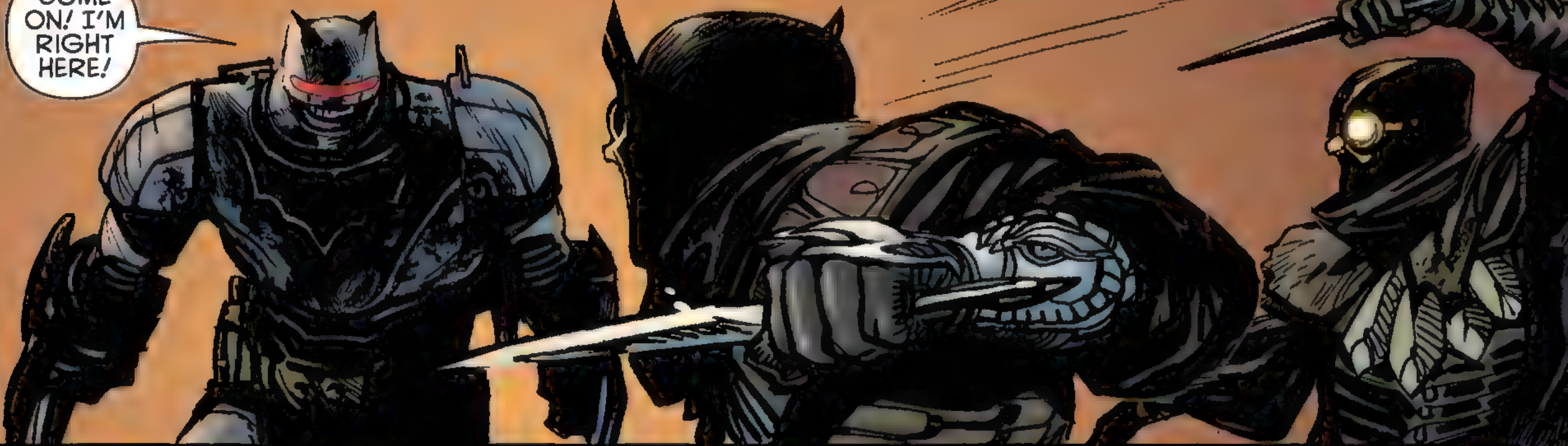
I WILL
KEEP
THE--

BANG!
BANG!

--KEEP THE
LINE TO THE CAVE
OPEN AS LONG
AS I CAN
MANAGE.

BANG!
BANG!

COME
ON! I'M
RIGHT
HERE!



BANG!
BANG!

WE'RE COMING
FOR YOU, TOO,
OLD MAN!

GOING TO TEAR
THE SKIN OFF
YOUR BACK!

GOOD LUCK
TO YOU...



NOW!
TAKE
HIM!

THE CALL

WRITERS SCOTT SNYDER & JAMES TYNION IV
ART RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE
COLORS NATHAN FAIRBAIRN
LETTERS PATRICK BROSEAU

...GOD
HELP US
ALL.



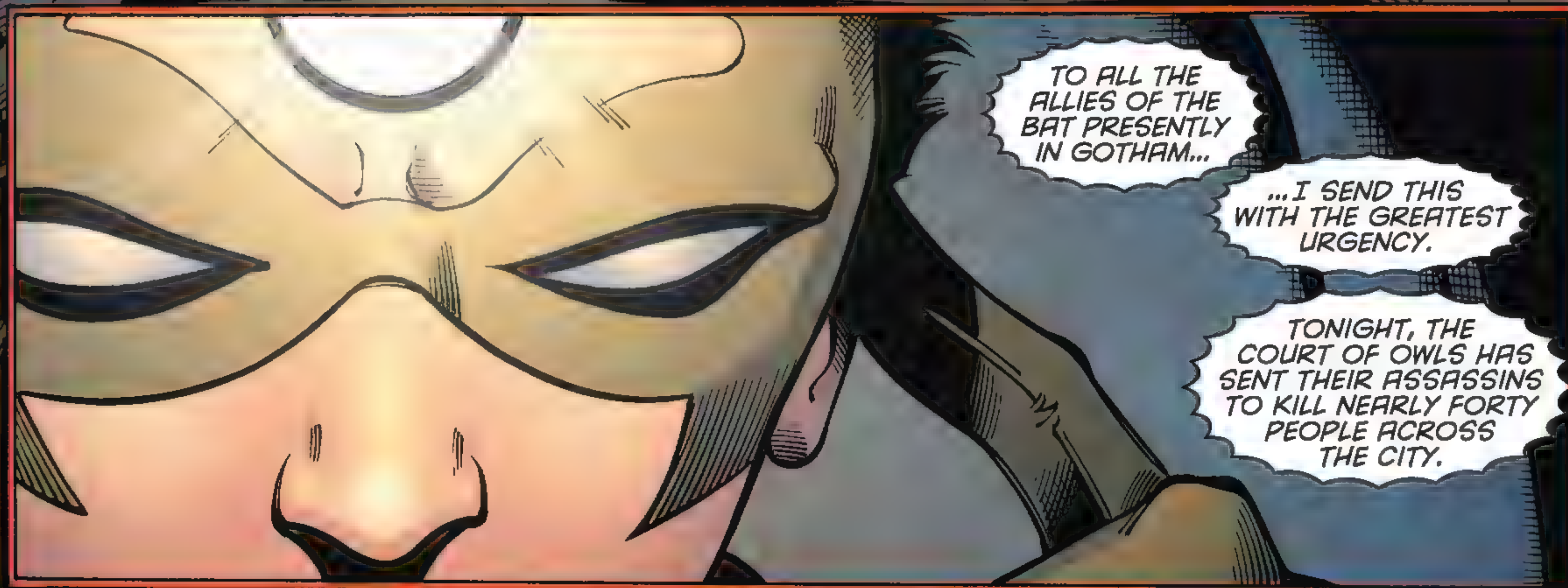


GOTHAM CITY. NIGHT OF THE OWLS. 7:38 P.M.

B-DEEP
B-DEEP



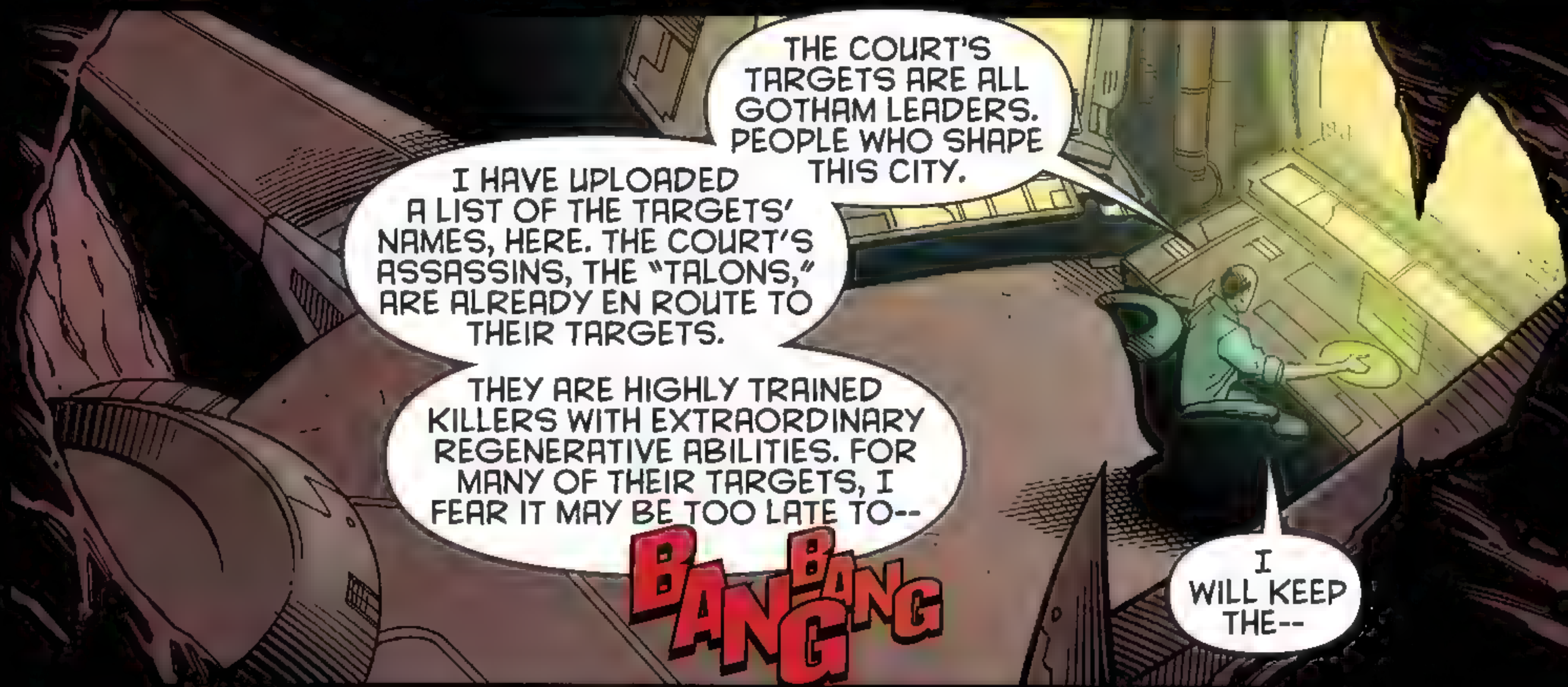
B-DEEP
B-DEEP



TO ALL THE
ALLIES OF THE
BAT PRESENTLY
IN GOTHAM...

...I SEND THIS
WITH THE GREATEST
URGENCY.

TONIGHT, THE
COURT OF OWLS HAS
SENT THEIR ASSASSINS
TO KILL NEARLY FORTY
PEOPLE ACROSS
THE CITY.

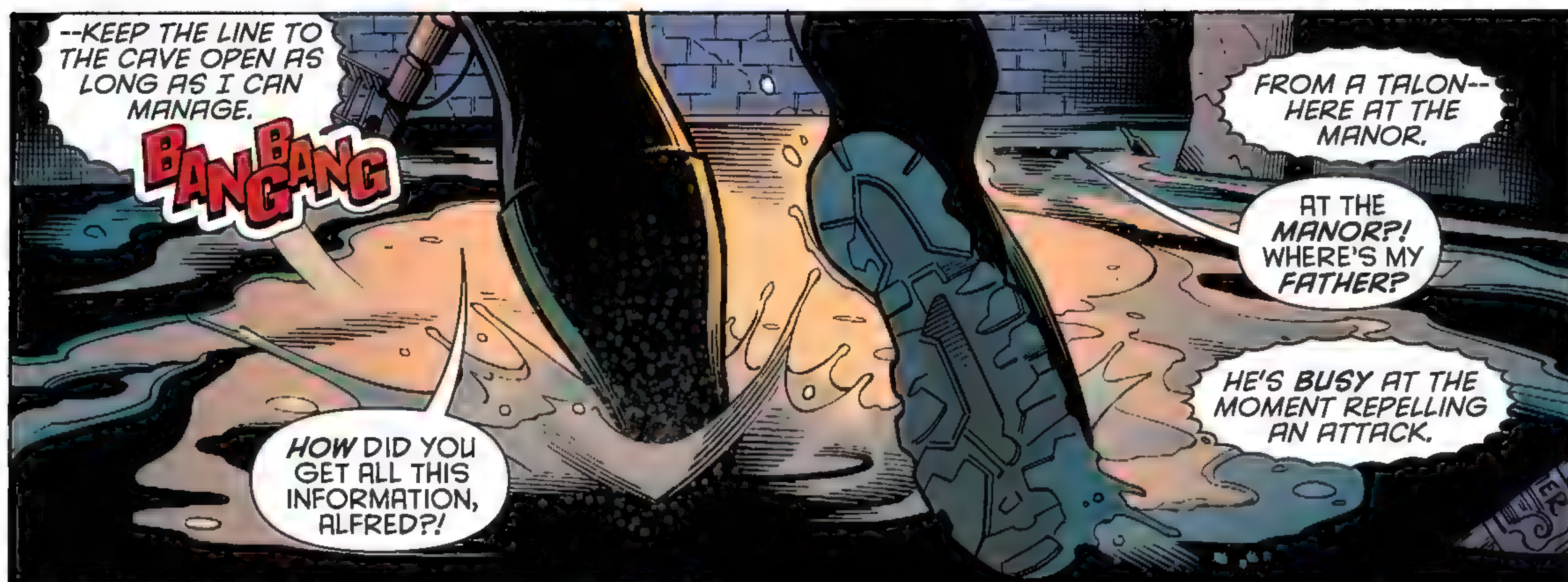


I HAVE UPLOADED
A LIST OF THE TARGETS'
NAMES, HERE. THE COURT'S
ASSASSINS, THE "TALONS,"
ARE ALREADY EN ROUTE TO
THEIR TARGETS.

THEY ARE HIGHLY TRAINED
KILLERS WITH EXTRAORDINARY
REGENERATIVE ABILITIES. FOR
MANY OF THEIR TARGETS, I
FEAR IT MAY BE TOO LATE TO--

BANG
BANG

I
WILL KEEP
THE--



--KEEP THE LINE TO THE CAVE OPEN AS LONG AS I CAN MANAGE.

BANG BANG

FROM A TALON--
HERE AT THE MANOR.

AT THE MANOR?
WHERE'S MY FATHER?

HE'S BUSY AT THE
MOMENT REPELLING
AN ATTACK.

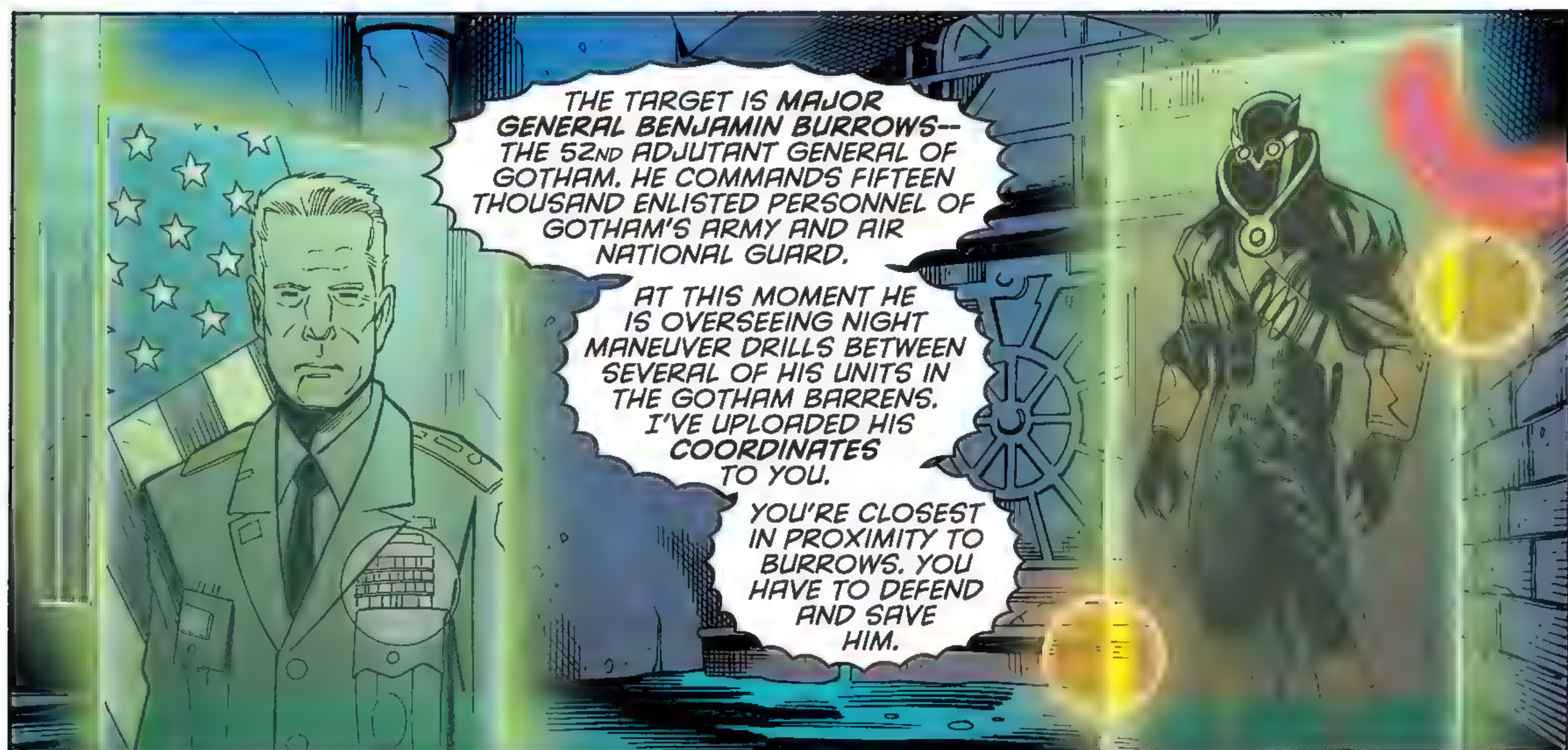
HOW DID YOU
GET ALL THIS
INFORMATION,
ALFRED?!



I'M COMING BACK
RIGHT NOW--
I SHOULD BE
THERE TO--

ROBIN--BE
QUIET AND
LISTEN TO
ME!

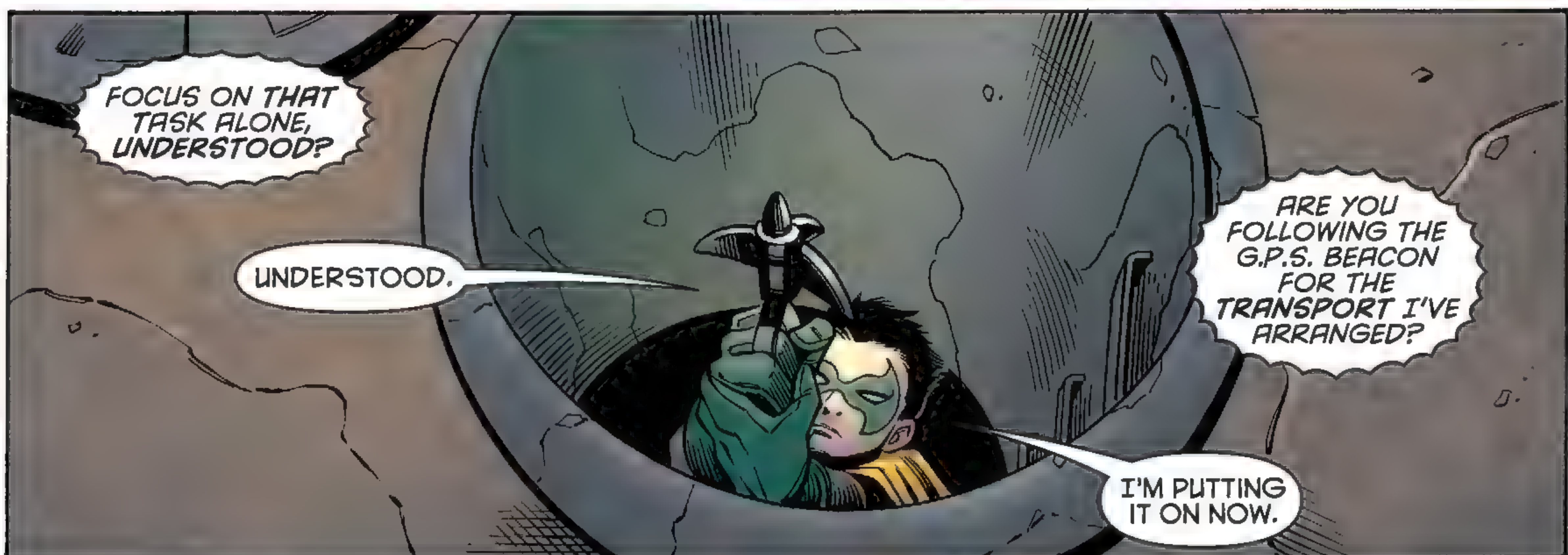
THE FILE I AM
UPLOADING TO
YOU CAME FROM
A MICRO-DRIVE
BATMAN RETRIEVED
FROM A TALON.



THE TARGET IS MAJOR
GENERAL BENJAMIN BURROWS--
THE 52ND ADJUTANT GENERAL OF
GOTHAM. HE COMMANDS FIFTEEN
THOUSAND ENLISTED PERSONNEL OF
GOTHAM'S ARMY AND AIR
NATIONAL GUARD.

AT THIS MOMENT HE
IS OVERSEEING NIGHT
MANEUVER DRILLS BETWEEN
SEVERAL OF HIS UNITS IN
THE GOTHAM BARRENS.
I'VE UPLOADED HIS
COORDINATES
TO YOU.

YOU'RE CLOSEST
IN PROXIMITY TO
BURROWS. YOU
HAVE TO DEFEND
AND SAVE
HIM.



FOCUS ON THAT
TASK ALONE,
UNDERSTOOD?

UNDERSTOOD.

ARE YOU
FOLLOWING THE
G.P.S. BEACON
FOR THE
TRANSPORT I'VE
ARRANGED?

I'M PUTTING
IT ON NOW.

NIGHT OF THE OWLS

ROBIN HEARS A HOO

GOOD
LUCK, MASTER
DAMIAN...

...GOD HELP
US ALL.

THAT'S FOR
SURE...

...I'LL NEED THIS
WING *AND* A
PRAYER TO GET
WHERE I'M GOING
TONIGHT.



PETER J. TOMASI: WRITER
LEE GARBETT: PENCILLER
ANDY CLARKE: ART PAGES 16-17
RAY MCCARTHY AND
KEITH CHAMPAGNE: INKERS
JOHN KALISZ: COLORIST
DEZI SIENTY: LETTERER

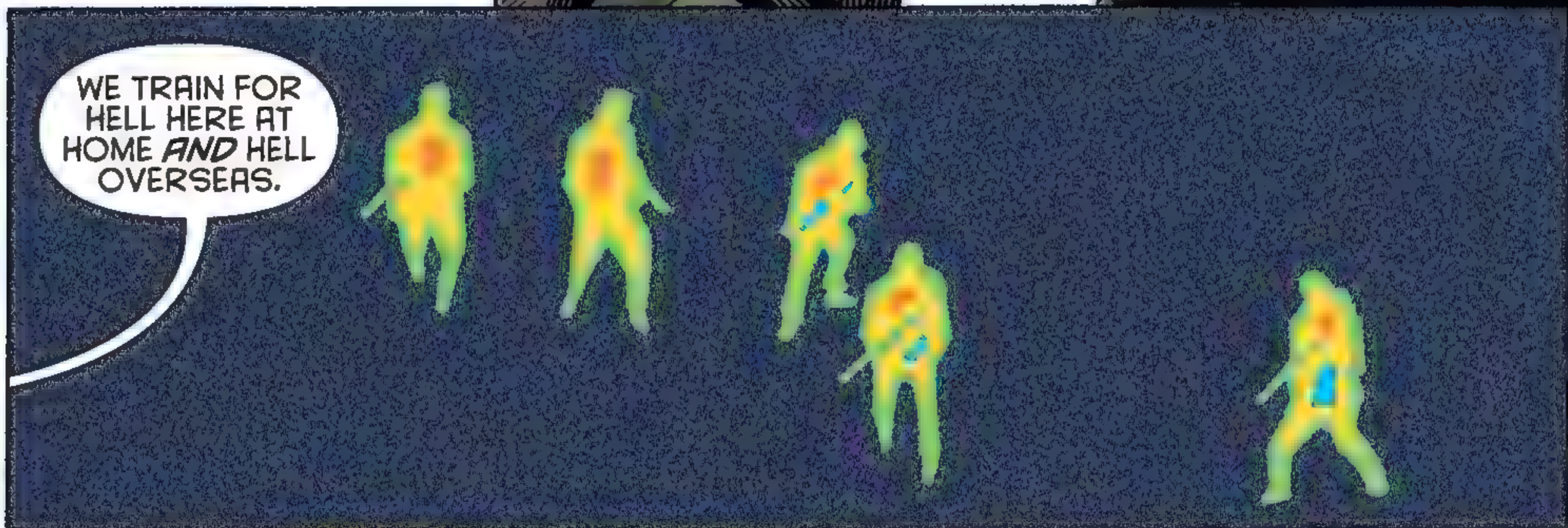


...YOU'RE **BUNCHED UP** TOO CLOSE TOGETHER, SERGEANT MUNSON.

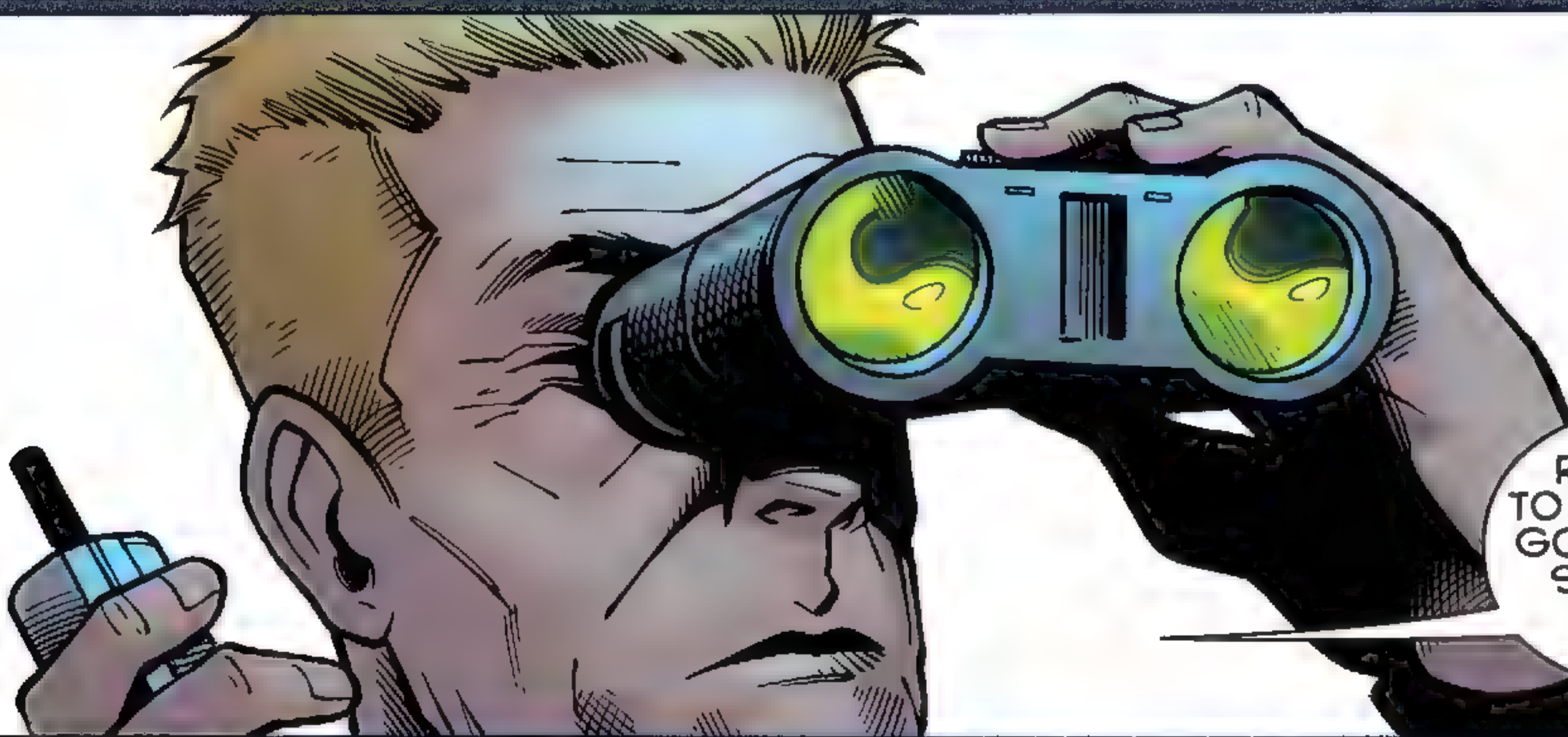


IF THIS WAS **AFGHANISTAN** YOUR ENTIRE PLATOON WOULD BE TAKEN OUT WITH ONE **RPG**.

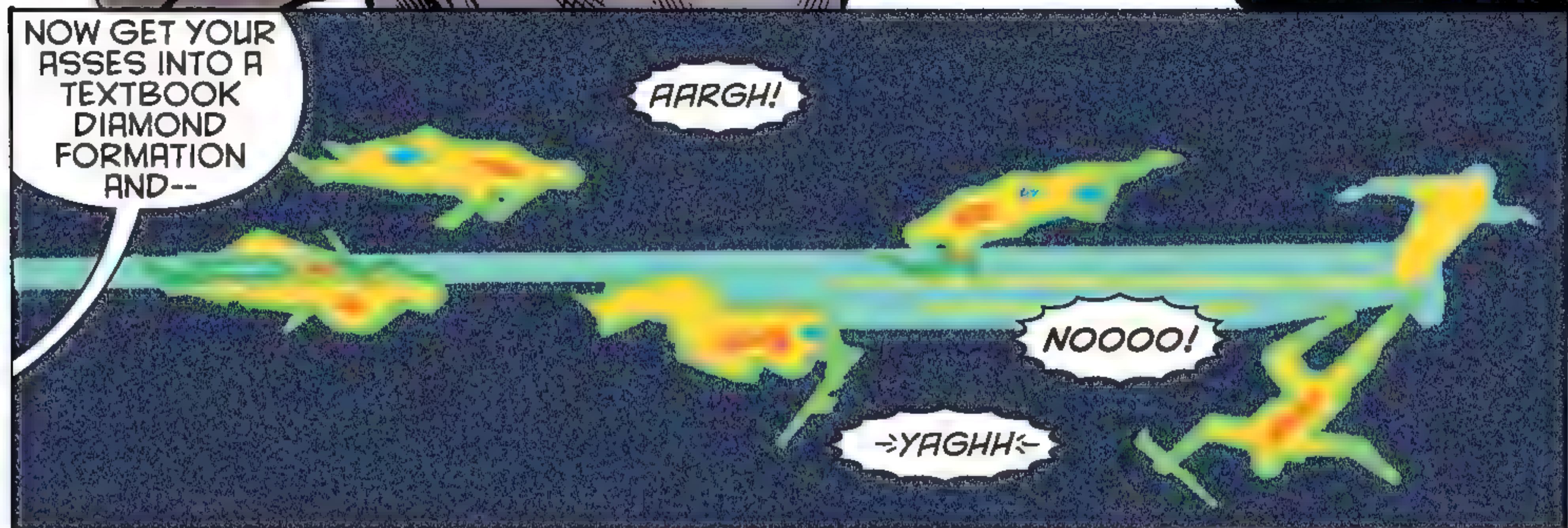
NEED I REMIND YOU GENTLEMEN THAT WE ARE **THE GUARD**.



WE TRAIN FOR HELL HERE AT HOME **AND** HELL OVERSEAS.



DELIVERING RED CROSS SUPPLIES TO A HURRICANE-BATTERED **GOTHAM** ONE NIGHT, THEN SITTING IN A **C-130** TO THE MIDDLE EAST TWO WEEKS LATER.



NOW GET YOUR **ASSES** INTO A TEXTBOOK **DIAMOND** FORMATION AND--

AARGH!

NOOOO!

=YAGHH=



SERGEANT
MUNSON, WHAT
THE HELL'S GOING
ON DOWN
THERE?

CAN YOU
HEAR ME---
I SAID---



WHAT'S GOING
ON, MAJOR GENERAL
BURROWS, IS THAT SOME
OF YOUR MEN HAVE
PROBABLY JUST BEEN
MURDERED BY
A TALON.

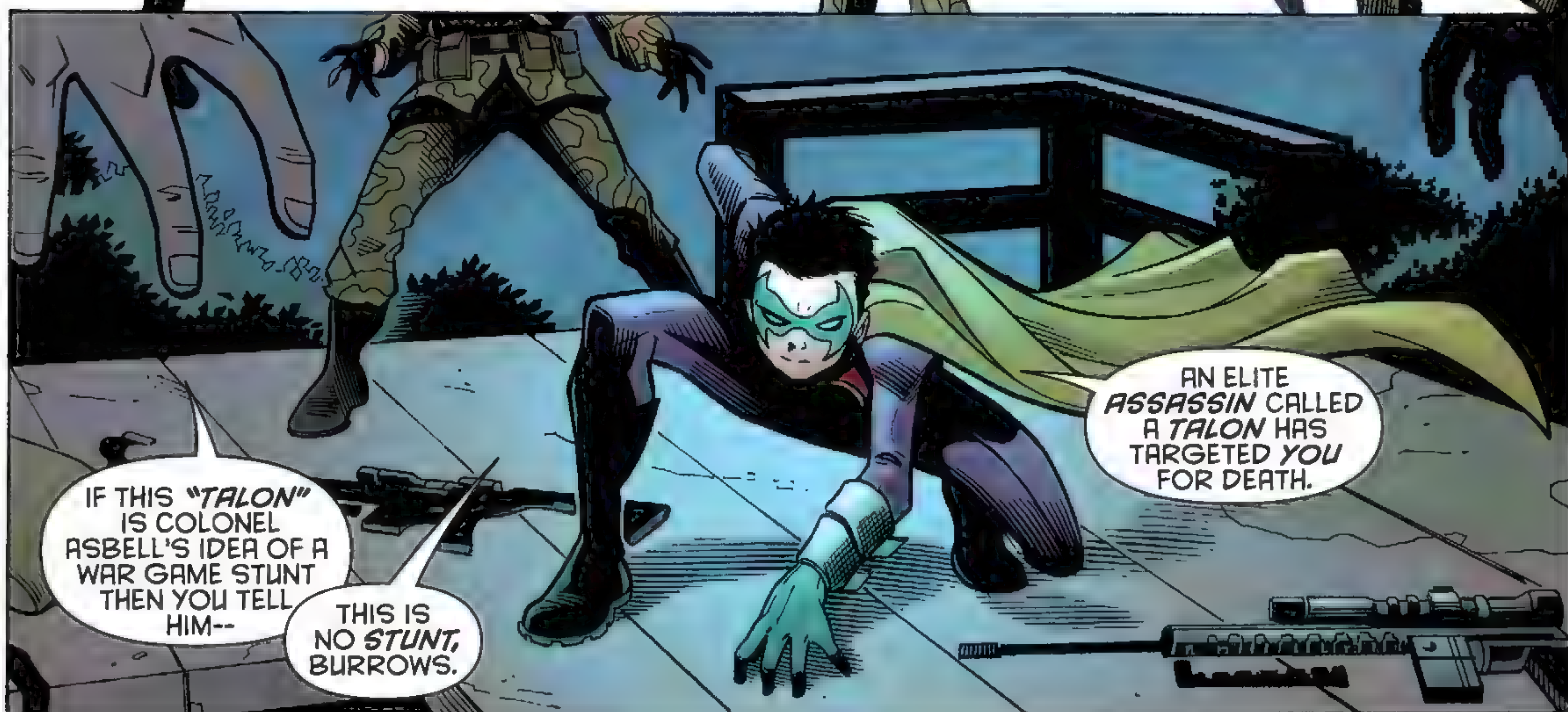
HOW THE--
GET THIS KID
SECURED!



HOLD IT--

--DON'T--

--MOVE!



IF THIS "**TALON**"
IS COLONEL
ASBELL'S IDEA OF A
WAR GAME STUNT
THEN YOU TELL
HIM--

THIS IS
NO **STUNT**,
BURROWS.

AN ELITE
ASSASSIN CALLED
A **TALON** HAS
TARGETED YOU
FOR DEATH.



AND WHY THE HELL SHOULD I BELIEVE YOU, KID?

BECAUSE YOUR NAME IS ON A *HIT LIST*.

WHOSE LIST?

A SECRET ORGANIZATION CALLED THE *COURT OF OWLS*.



FROM THE OLD GOTHAM *NURSERY RHYME*?

BEFORE MY TIME.

WHERE'S BATMAN?

SAVING WHO HE CAN TONIGHT.



AND IF YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE THIS TALON BUTCHER THE REST OF YOUR MEN JUST TO GET TO YOU, YOU'LL COME WITH ME.

I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE BUT *DOWN* THIS LADDER.

PRIVATE, GET THE COMPANY COMMANDERS ON THE LINE--I WANT A SITREP NOW BACK AT THE CP IMMEDIA--



SOMEONE'S CUT OUR ZIP LINES!

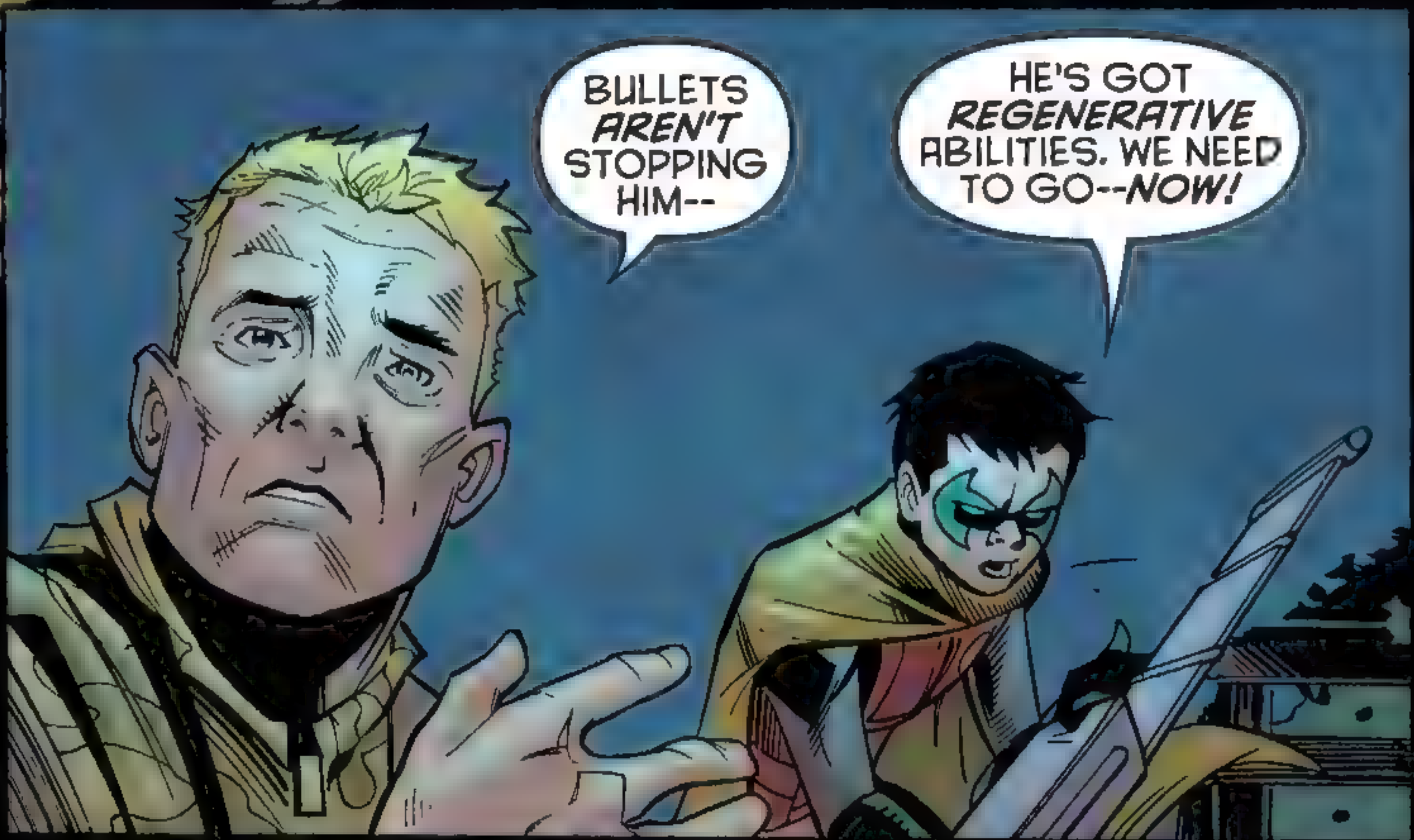


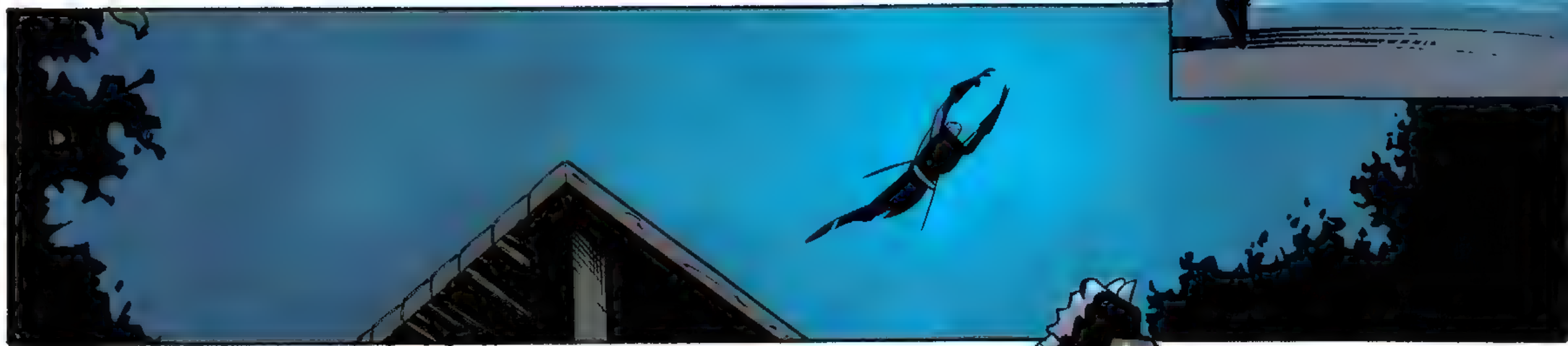
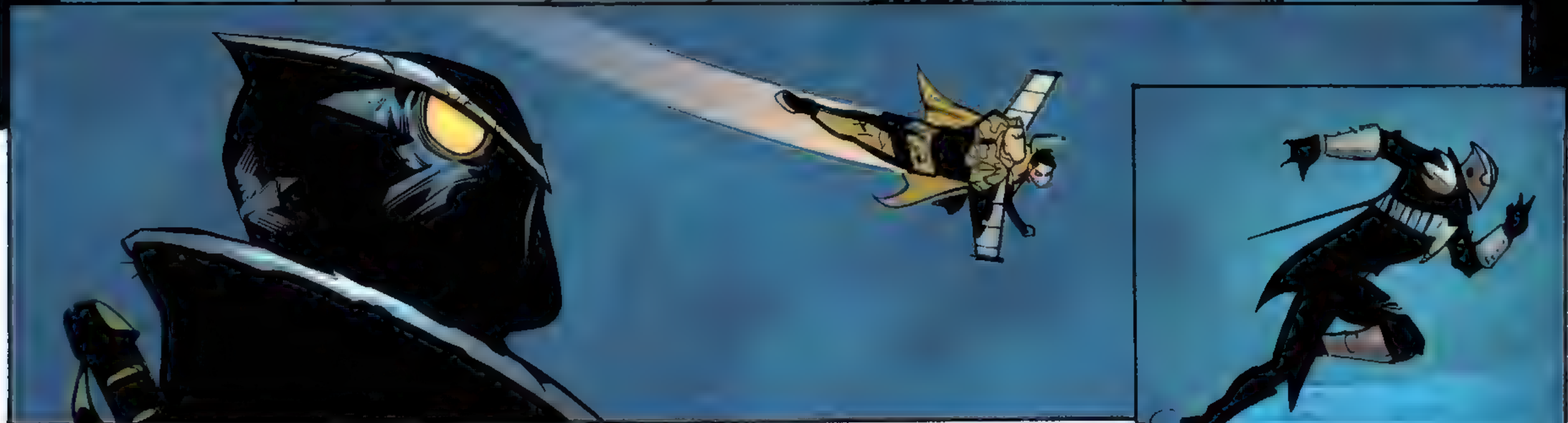
I THINK WE NEED TO WORRY ABOUT WHO'S COMING *UP* THIS LADDER.

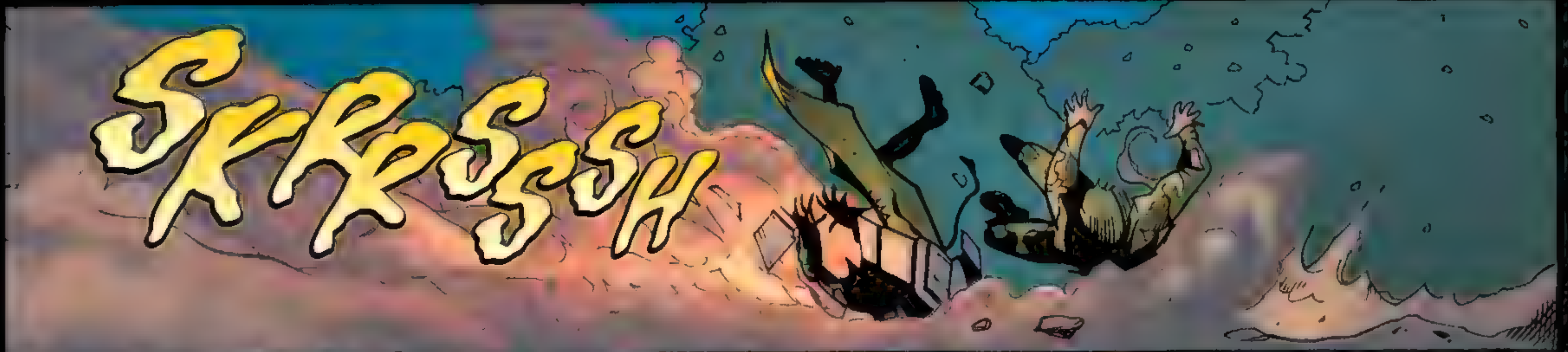
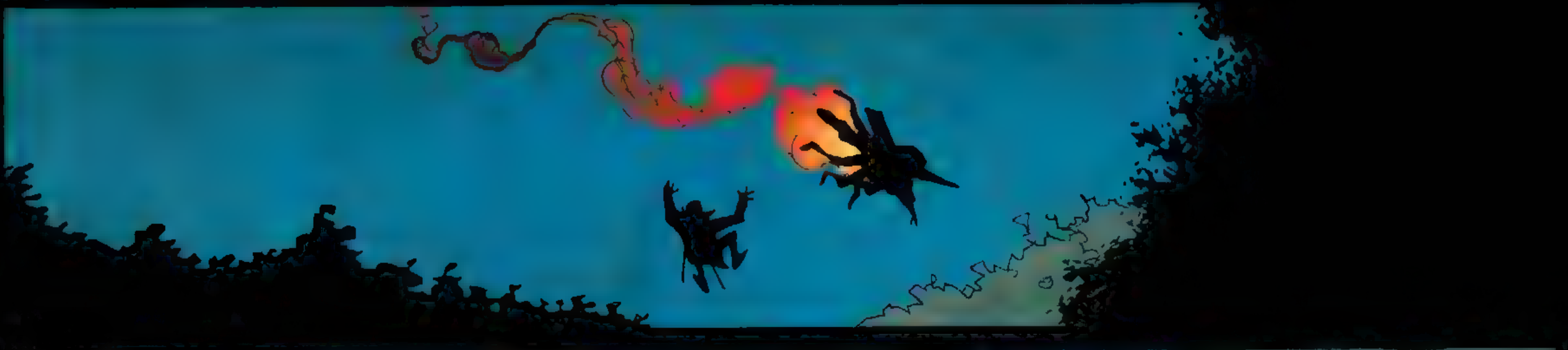
LIVE AMMO. NOW.

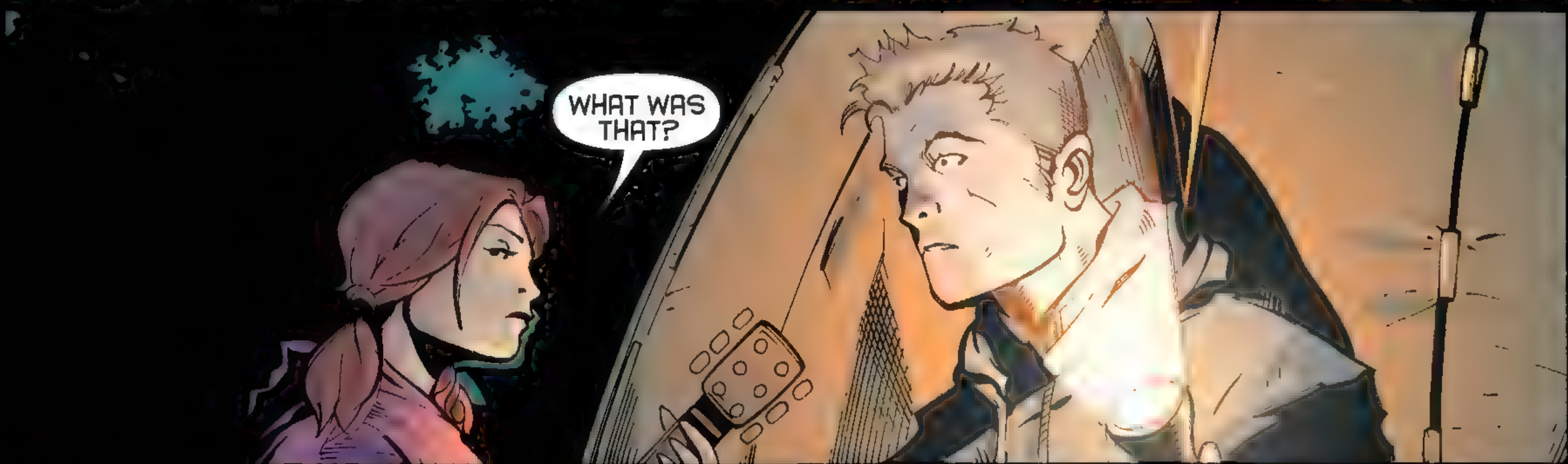
LIVE? WHAT DID YOU HAVE BEFORE?

BLANKS. THIS WAS A *TRAINING* EXERCISE.





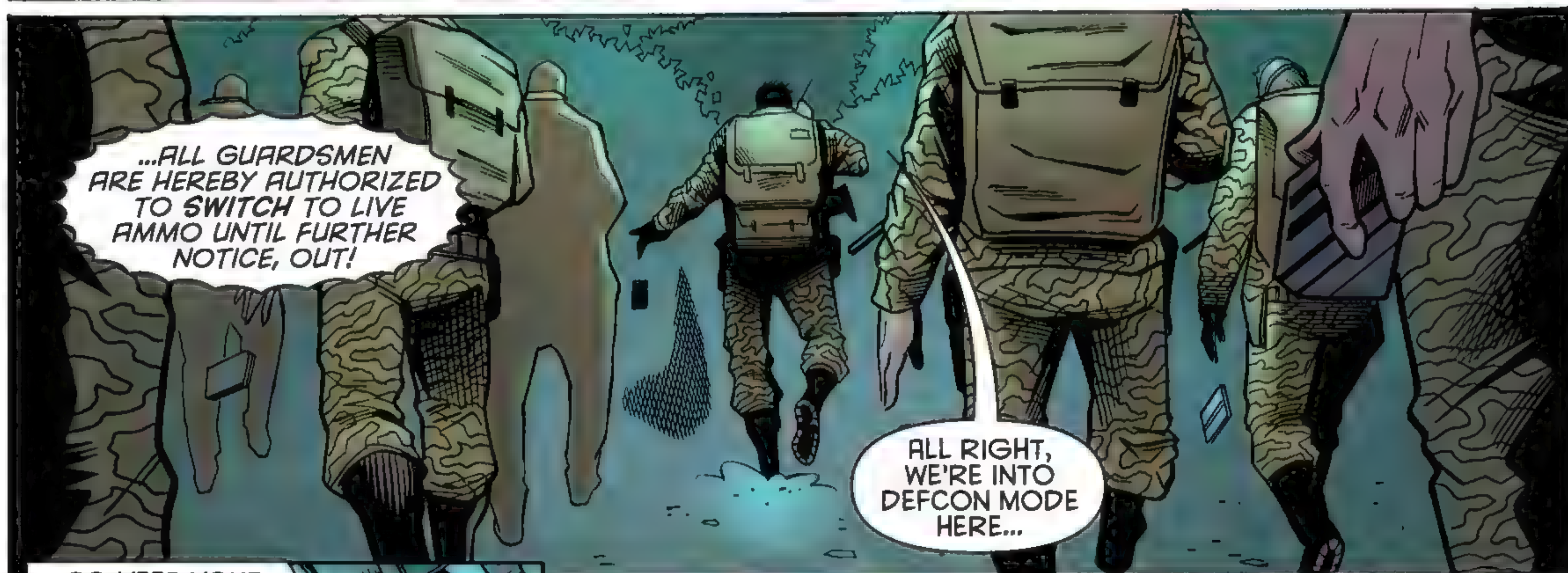






...PLEASE
CONFIRM THAT
ORDER, SIR.

DUE TO MAJOR
GENERAL BURROWS'
DISAPPEARANCE AND
THE DISCOVERY OF
SEVERAL GUARDSMEN'S
BODIES...

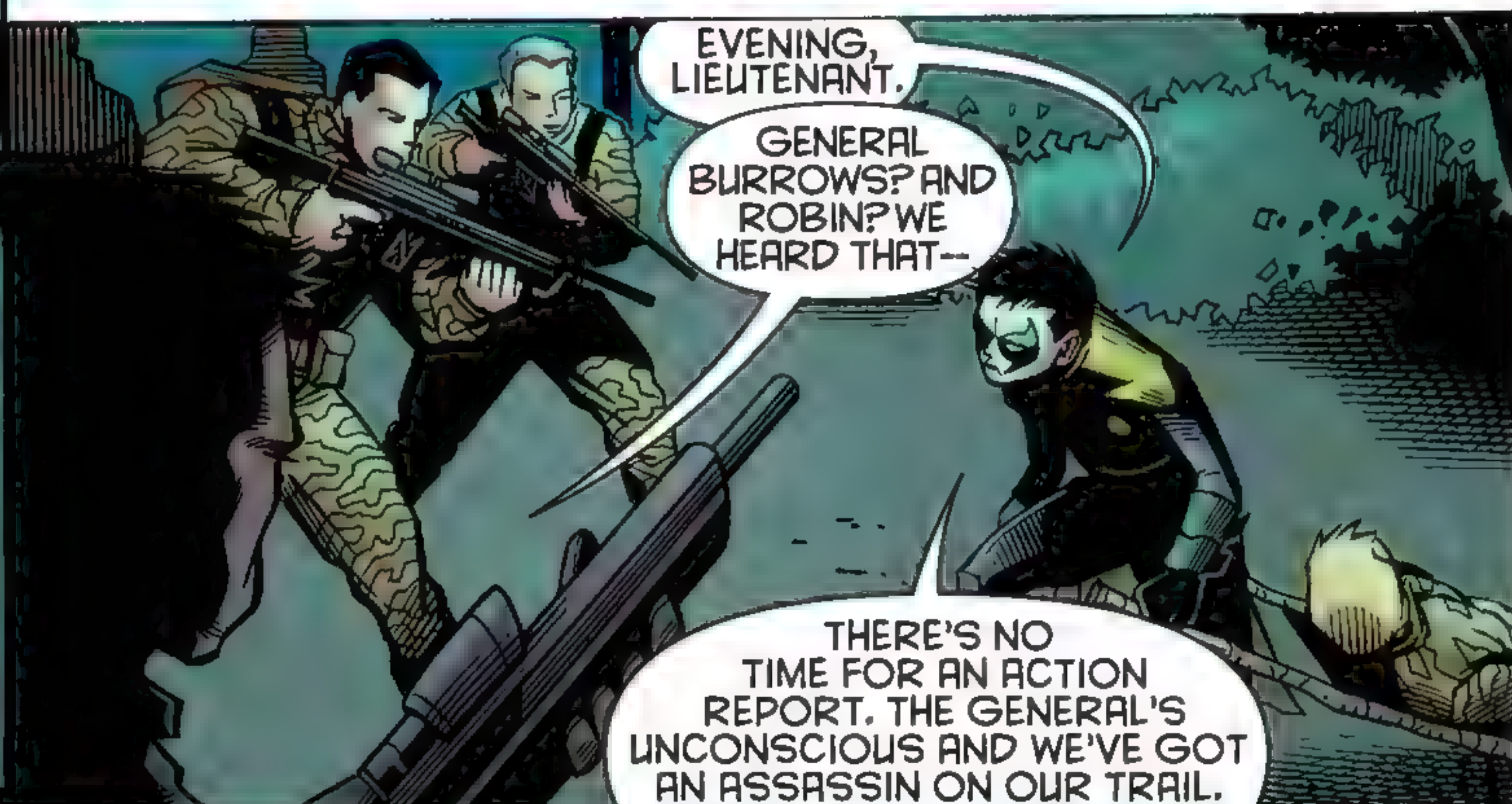


...ALL GUARDSMEN
ARE HEREBY AUTHORIZED
TO SWITCH TO LIVE
AMMO UNTIL FURTHER
NOTICE, OUT!

ALL RIGHT,
WE'RE INTO
DEFCON MODE
HERE...



...SO KEEP YOUR
EYES PEELED FOR
ANY SIGN OF--



EVENING,
LIEUTENANT.

GENERAL
BURROWS? AND
ROBIN? WE
HEARD THAT--

THERE'S NO
TIME FOR AN ACTION
REPORT. THE GENERAL'S
UNCONSCIOUS AND WE'VE GOT
AN ASSASSIN ON OUR TRAIL.



WE NEED TO SET UP A
DEFENSIVE INFANTRY
SQUARE NOW!

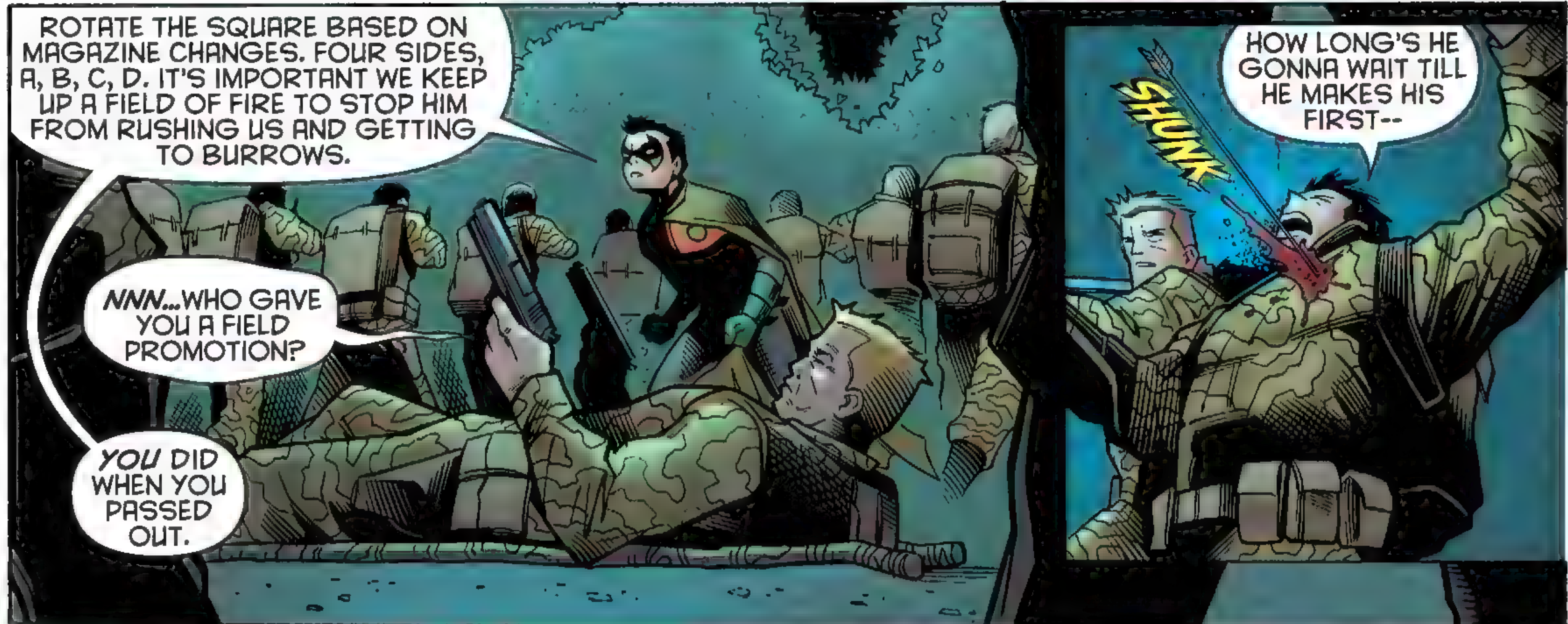
WHY THE
HELL SHOULD
WE BE
LISTENING TO
A FREAKIN'
KID?

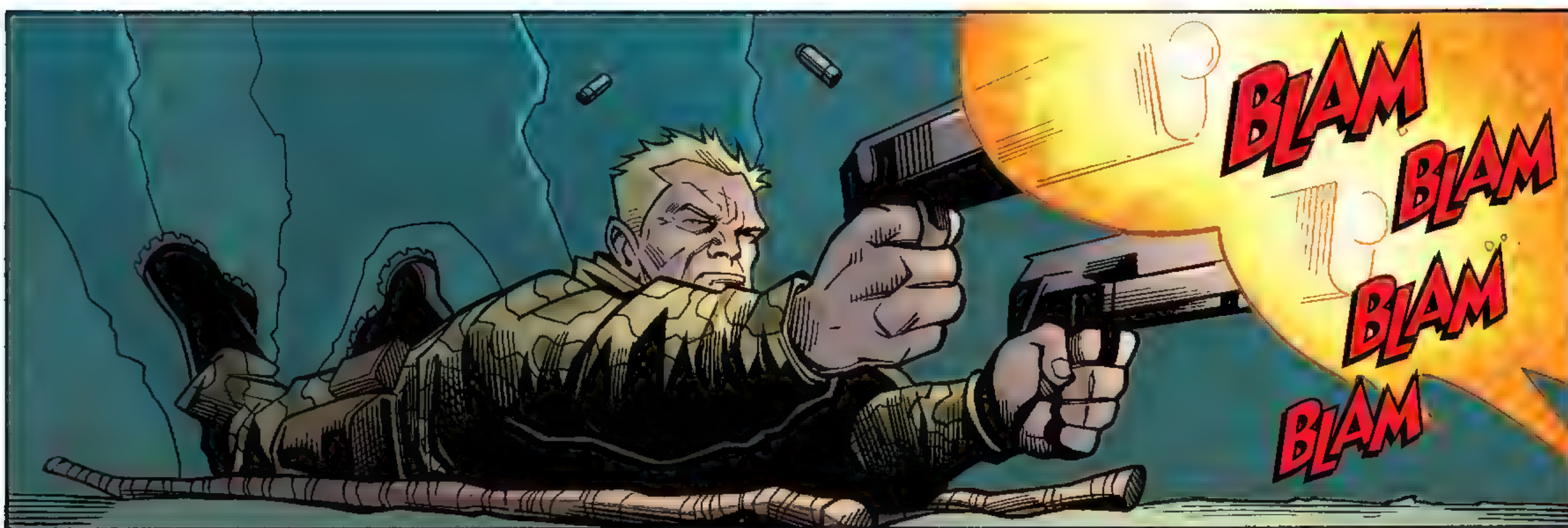
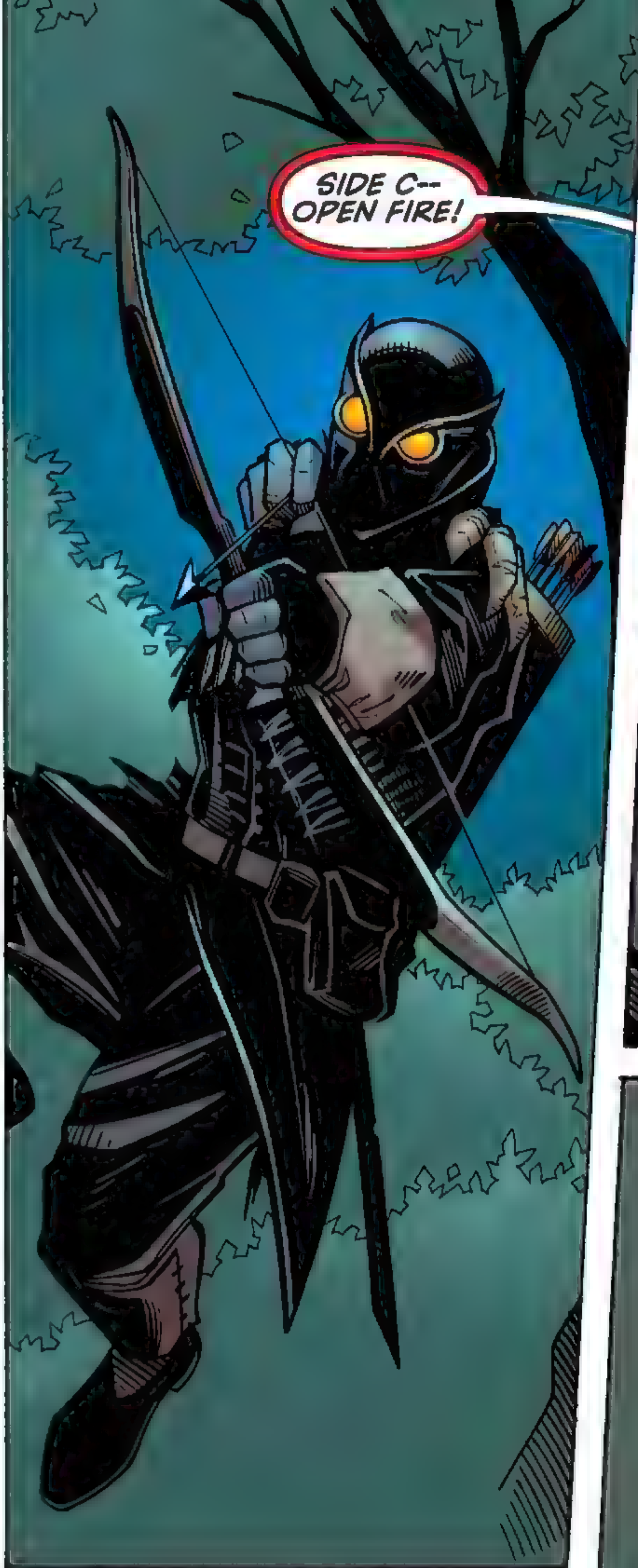
BECAUSE THIS *KID* READ
CLAUSEWITZ AND *JOMINI* AT
THE AGE OF SIX WHILE YOU
WERE STILL TRYING TO
FIGURE OUT THE BUTTONS
ON A Q-BOX, YOU
IMBECILE!

NOW ALL OF
YOU--FOLLOW
MY ORDERS!

THE TALON
WON'T BE
STAYING IN A
FIXED POSITION
AND NEITHER
WILL WE!



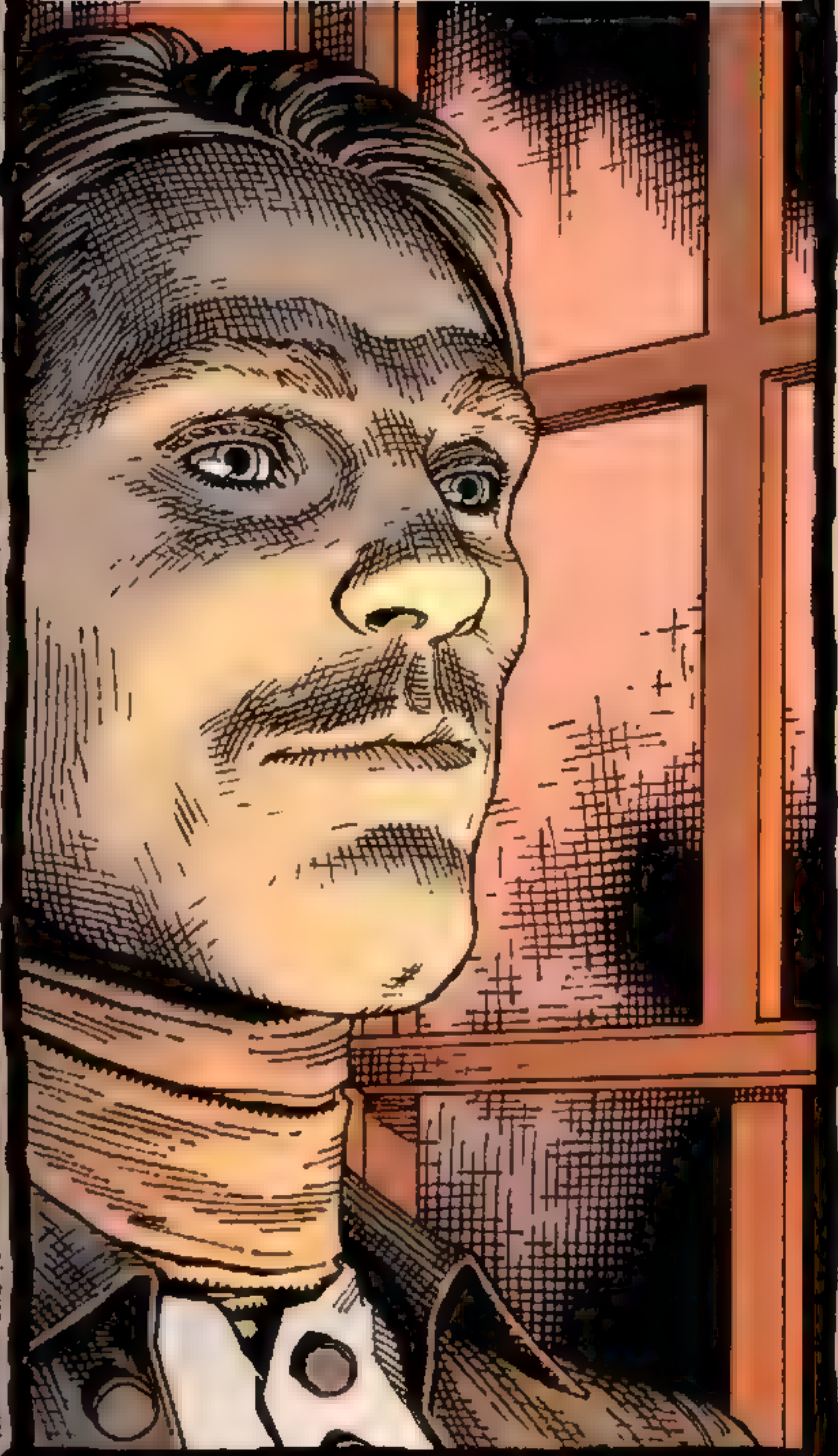








"BACK IN 1778, EDWIN WILKINS, A CONTINENTAL ARMY SPY, TOOK ON A DANGEROUS MISSION IN GOTHAM BUT ONLY ON THE CONDITION THAT HIS FAMILY BE TAKEN CARE OF IN CASE OF HIS DEATH, WHICH EVERYONE ASSUMED, WAS LIKELY.



"GENERAL WASHINGTON HIMSELF PROMISED WILKINS THAT HIS LOVED ONES WOULD RECEIVE A SIGNIFICANT LAND GRANT FOR HIS SERVICE IF THEIR WAR OF INDEPENDENCE PROVED TRIUMPHANT.



"WILKINS' MISSION WAS SUCCESSFUL AND HE MANAGED TO PASS THE INFORMATION HE HAD GLEANED TO CAPTAIN ALEXANDER HAMILTON ONLY MOMENTS PRIOR TO HIS CAPTURE BY THE BRITISH.



"WILKINS WAS IMPRISONED ON A BRITISH FRIGATE IN GOTHAM HARBOR AWAITING A HANGMAN'S NOOSE...

"...WHEN IT WAS LEARNED THAT THE AMERICANS HAD CAPTURED SEVERAL HIGH-RANKING BRITISH OFFICERS, RESULTING IN THE PROMISE OF A PRISONER EXCHANGE.



"I WAS SUMMONED FROM MY NEST AND GIVEN AN ORDER BY THE COURT OF OWLS TO ERADICATE WILKINS AND ALL BLOOD RELATIVES...



"...SO THE LAND GRANT THAT WOULD PASS TO HIM AND HIS ANCESTORS IN THE UNLIKELY CASE OF A COLONIAL VICTORY COULD LATER BE BOUGHT WITHOUT DIFFICULTY BY A FAVORITE SON OF THE COURT AND DEVELOPED FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS.

"AFTER SWIMMING UNDERWATER THROUGH SENTRY POINTS, I SECRETLY SLIPPED ONTO THE BRITISH PRISON FRIGATE AND KILLED EDWIN IN HIS SLEEP.



"I WAITED UNTIL 1783 TO ELIMINATE THE REST OF THE WILKINS FAMILY AFTER THEY LEGALLY TOOK HOLD OF THEIR LAND GRANT SO THERE WOULD BE NO HEIRS.

"EDWIN WILKINS' YOUNGEST SON, SAMUEL, SOMEHOW SURVIVED THE GRIEVOUS WOUNDS I INFLICTED UPON HIM.

"SAMUEL WAS APPARENTLY HIDDEN AWAY AND RAISED BY FRIENDS OF THE WILKINS FAMILY WHILE THE COURT OF OWLS EVENTUALLY TOOK CONTROL OF THE LAND.



"THIS FAMILY'S SURNAME WAS BURROWS."

YOU, BENJAMIN BURROWS, ARE A DIRECT DESCENDANT OF EDWIN WILKINS, WHICH IS WHY I ASKED SPECIFICALLY FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT.

YOU HAVE NO CHILDREN, YOUR BLOODLINE FINALLY ENDS HERE, AS DOES YOUR TRUE CLAIM ON THE LAND THAT WILL SOON BE IN POSSESSION OF THE COURT OF OWLS.

TONIGHT, I FINISH WHAT I STARTED.

POOM

ARGGGH!

SO DO I.

YOU HAVE...

...GOT TO BE...

...KIDDING ME!







GOTHAM CITY, 1910.

THIS IS A STORY
ABOUT LOVE.

ABOUT
SACRIFICE.

ABOUT
BETRAYAL.

THIS IS THE
STORY...

...OF HOW THE MAN I WILL
KILL TONIGHT IS GOTHAM'S
WORST BETRAYER OF ALL.

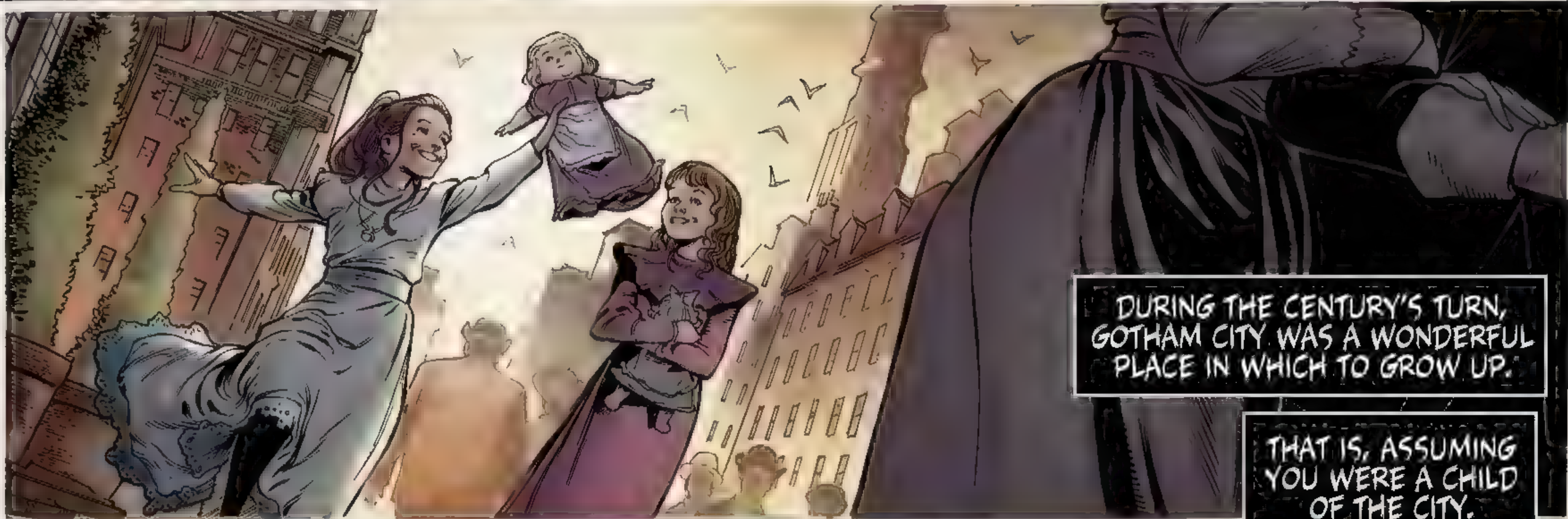
After witnessing the deaths of his parents as a boy, Dick Grayson was taken under Batman's wing, becoming Robin, the Boy Wonder. But when the Boy Wonder became a man, he shed the identity of Robin and branded himself as...

NIGHTWING

BLOODLINES

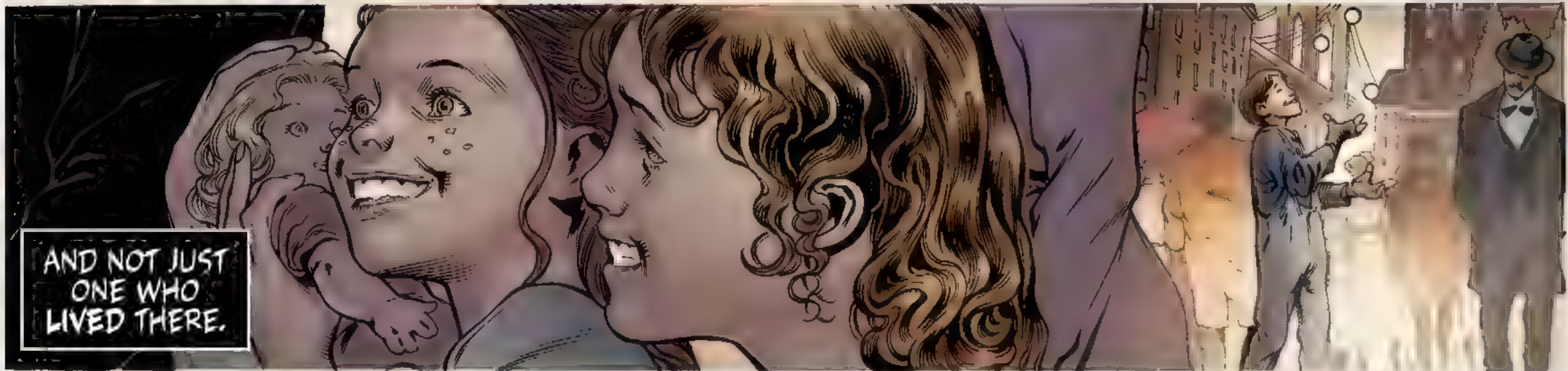


KYLE HIGGINS WRITER **EDDY BARROWS** PENCILS
RUY JOSÉ & EBER FERREIRA INKS **ROD REIS** COLORS
PAT BROSEAU LETTERS



DURING THE CENTURY'S TURN,
GOTHAM CITY WAS A WONDERFUL
PLACE IN WHICH TO GROW UP.

THAT IS, ASSUMING
YOU WERE A CHILD
OF THE CITY.



AND NOT JUST
ONE WHO
LIVED THERE.

I WAS BORN ON THE TENTH OF
OCTOBER, IN THE YEAR NINETEEN
HUNDRED AND ONE. I WAS NOT A
CHILD OF GOTHAM.

AFTER ALL, TO BE SUCH A THING
WOULD HAVE REQUIRED MY FATHER TO
BE A MEMBER OF GOTHAM'S HIGH
SOCIETY, AND NO ONE REPRESENTED
THAT BETTER THAN THESE FOUR MEN.



ALAN
WAYNE...

...FREDERIC
COBBLEPOT...

...EDWARD
ELLIOT...

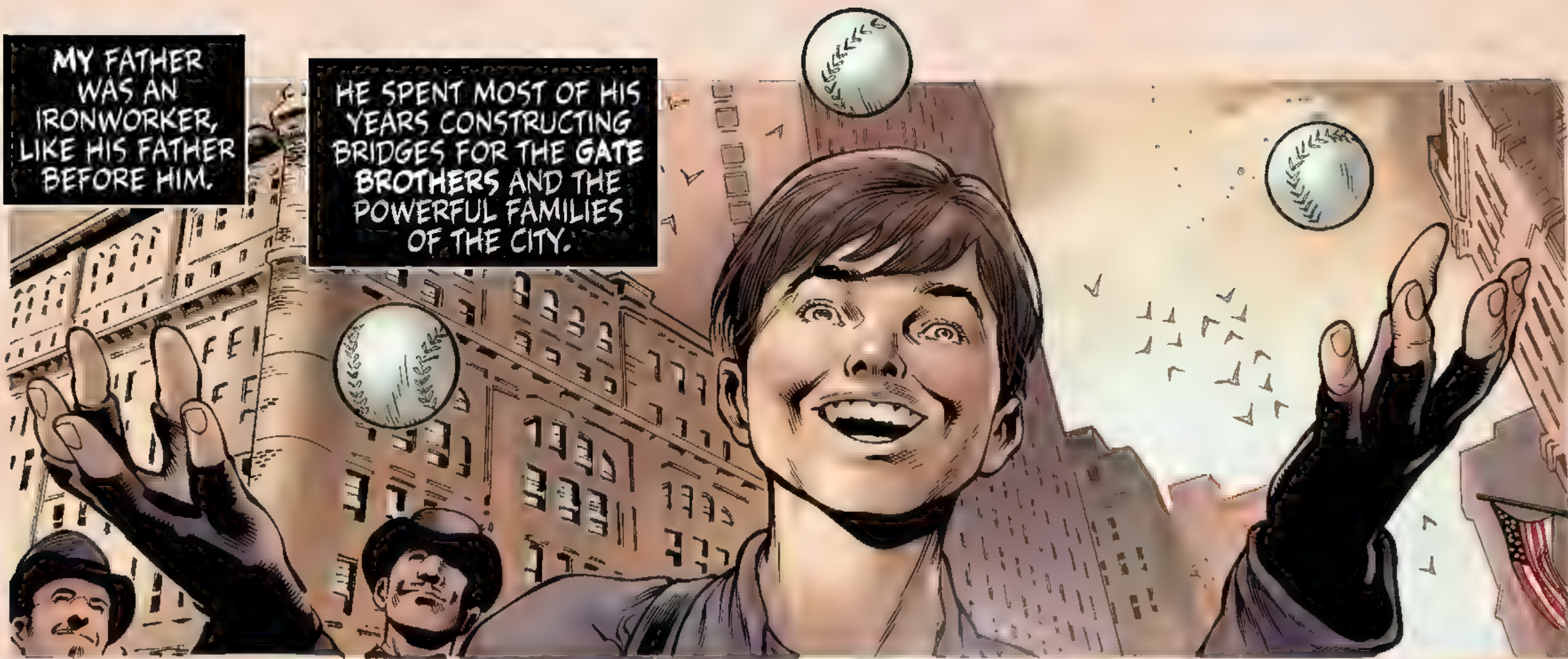
...AND
BURTON
CROWNE.

THE
ELITE OF
GOTHAM.

COME ALONG,
AMELIA. IT'S
TIME TO GO.

MY FATHER
WAS AN
IRONWORKER,
LIKE HIS FATHER
BEFORE HIM.

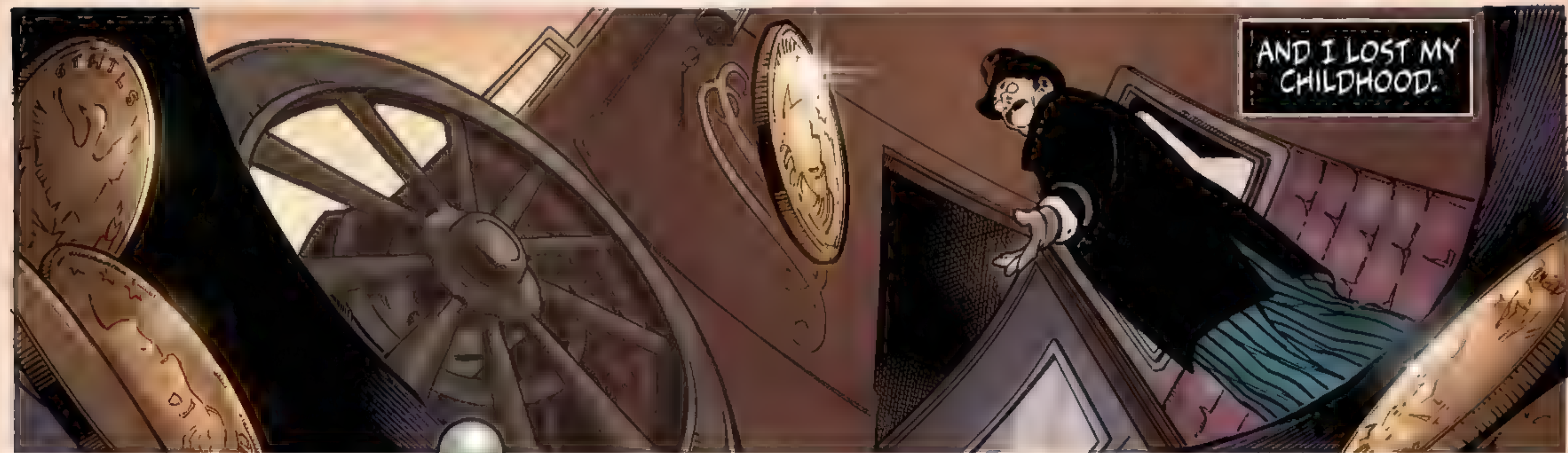
HE SPENT MOST OF HIS
YEARS CONSTRUCTING
BRIDGES FOR THE GATE
BROTHERS AND THE
POWERFUL FAMILIES
OF THE CITY.



WHEN CAMERON KANE'S
BRIDGE COLLAPSED MIDWAY
THROUGH CONSTRUCTION,
MY FATHER LOST HIS LIFE.



AND I LOST MY
CHILDHOOD.

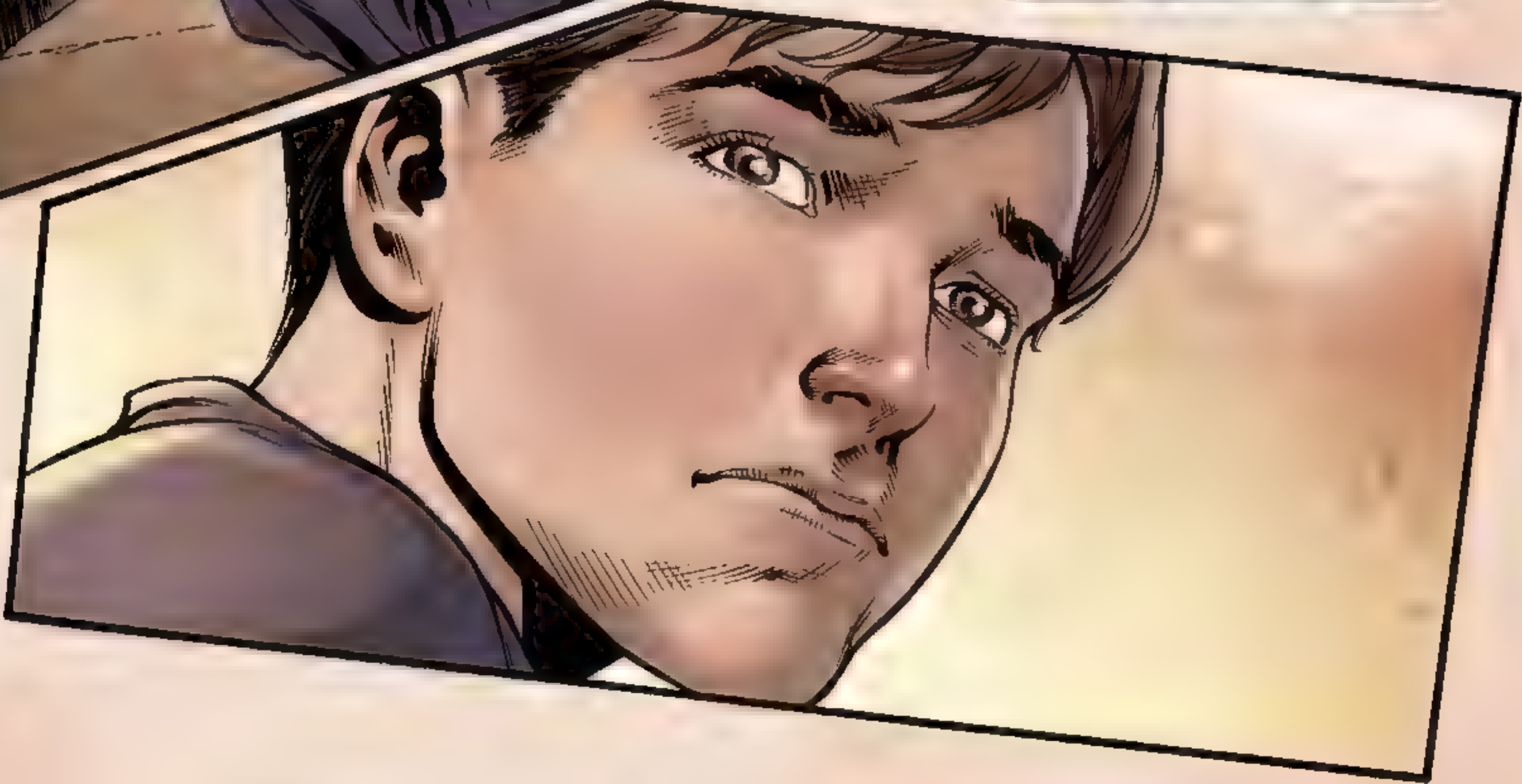


I OFTEN POINT TO THESE
YEARS AS HAVING THE
MOST PROFOUND EFFECT
ON WHAT I WOULD
EVENTUALLY BECOME.

JUGGLING FOR
PENNIES WHILE
SURROUNDED BY THE
"EXTRAVAGANCE"
OF GOTHAM.



HOW MUCH MORE
HOPELESS CAN
ONE FEEL?





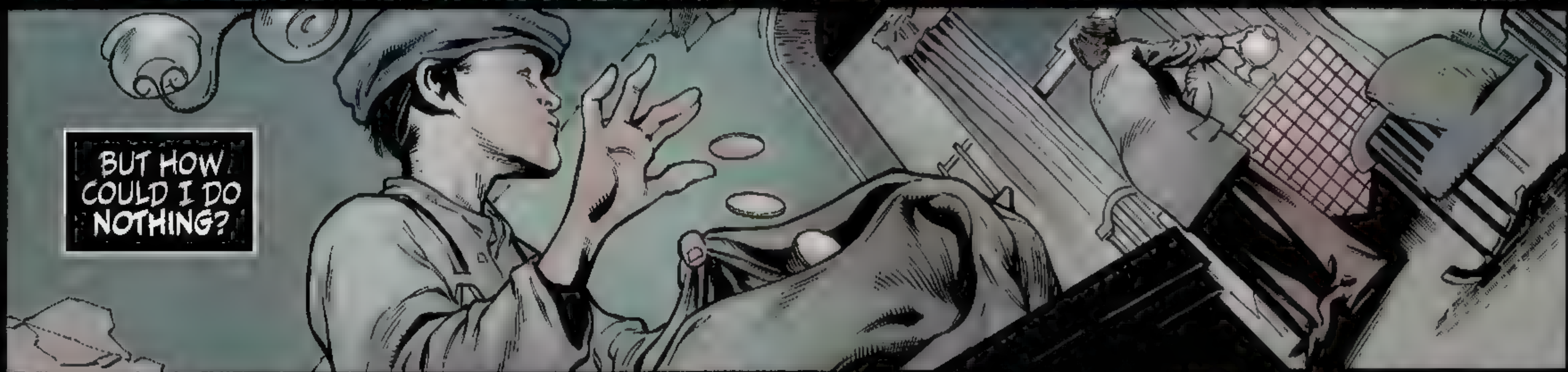
MY MOTHER SPENT
HER DAYS WORKING
IN A TEXTILE PLANT.

THOUGH I WAS NOT OLD
ENOUGH TO BE ON MY OWN, WE
HADN'T THE MONEY FOR ANYONE
TO LOOK AFTER ME.

WE BARELY
HAD MONEY
FOR FOOD.



EVEN STILL, MY
MOTHER HAD WARNED
ABOUT "BEGGING." SHE
HAD FORBIDDEN ME
FROM BEING ON
STREET CORNERS.



BUT HOW
COULD I DO
NOTHING?



IT CONTINUED
LIKE THAT FOR
MONTHS.



AND WELL
INTO THE
NEXT YEAR.

UNTIL A CHANCE
OCCURRENCE
CHANGED
EVERYTHING.



GOTHAM CITY. PRESENT DAY.

Even with everything that's happened the past few weeks, this one hurts. A lot.

The Strayhorn Brothers--
a double murder in
Old Gotham last week.

Beaten to death
with one of my
Escrima sticks.



Of course,
whenever a "Bat"
weapon turns up
like this, the media
circus is never
far behind.

Like the Rossini
murder last year.



Except it's been a
week without word
of the murder
weapon hitting
the media at all.

So...



...what's
different
about you?

Incoming
transmission
from Alfred
Pennyworth.

TO ALL THE
ALLIES OF THE
BAT PRESENTLY
IN GOTHAM...

NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 7:40 PM...



...I SEND
THIS WITH THE
GREATEST
URGENCY.

TONIGHT, THE
COURT OF OWLS HAS
SENT THEIR ASSASSINS
TO KILL NEARLY FORTY
PEOPLE ACROSS
THE CITY.

WHA--?

THE COURT'S
TARGETS ARE ALL
GOTHAM LEADERS.
PEOPLE WHO SHAPE
THIS CITY.

I HAVE
UPLOADED
A LIST OF THE
TARGETS' NAMES,
HERE.

THE COURT'S
ASSASSINS, THE
"TALONS," ARE
ALREADY EN
ROUTE TO THEIR
TARGETS.

ARKHAM A.
HEAD AND
DIRECTOR --
JEREMIAH
ARKHAM
GOTHAM CITY
MAYOR --
SEBASTIAN
GOTHAM C
DEPUTY
THOMAS
KAVAN
GOTH
COL

THEY ARE
HIGHLY TRAINED
KILLERS WITH
EXTRAORDINARY
REGENERATIVE
ABILITIES.

FOR
MANY OF THEIR
TARGETS, I FEAR IT
MAY BE TOO
LATE--

I WILL
KEEP THE--

BANG!

BANG!

--KEEP THE
LINE TO THE
CAVE OPEN AS
LONG AS I CAN
MANAGE.

The Strayhorn
Brothers will
have to wait.

ALFRED--
I'M AT THE
G.C.P.D. NOW,
BUT THIS PLACE
IS FORT KNOX
COMPARED
TO CITY HALL.
COMMISSIONER
GORDON HAS
AN ARMY WITH
HIM HERE.

I CAN GET
TO MAYOR
HADY IN FIVE
MINUTES--

"--LET'S PRAY
THAT'S *FAST*
ENOUGH!"

CITY HALL

I'M TELLING
YOU RIGHT
NOW, MAYOR
HADY--

--IT'LL PASS THE COUNCIL VOTE. I
MEAN, IT'LL TAKE A BIT A' FINESSE.
REDISTRICTING THE EQUIVALENT
OF SLUM LAND *JUST* TO PREVENT
BRUCE WAYNE FROM REBUILDING
ISN'T EXACTLY AN EASY--

THANK YOU, COUNCILMAN
DAVIS. I'VE NOTED YOUR OPINION.
BUT RIGHT NOW I'M MORE INTERESTED
IN DEPUTY MAYOR KAVANAUGH'S
ANSWERING MY *ORIGINAL* QUESTION.

SIR?

STOP
DANCING AND
GIVE ME AN
ANSWER, THOMAS.
CAN I *COUNT* ON
YOU IN ALL THIS?
CAN THIS
GODFORSAKEN
CITY COUNT
ON YOU?

SHOOON

WHAT THE
HELL?

I'LL GO
TALK TO
SECURITY.

I'VE GOT FIVE
DOLLARS THAT SAYS
NOBODY TOLD THEM
WE WERE STILL--



WHAT...
THE--



MAYOR
SEBASTIAN
HADY--FOR YOUR
CORRUPTION AND
BETRAYAL OF
GOTHAM...



...THE COURT
OF OWLS HAS
SENTENCED
YOU TO DIE!

Dammit, I'm too late.

Councilman Davis and at least two...three security guards I can see in the hall--dead.

WELL, WELL, WELL... WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?

THE BAT'S LITTLE BIRDIE COME OUT TO PLAY WITH THE OWLS? HOW FUN FOR ME.

SORRY--

--NOT QUITE.

HA HA HA, YOU MUST PLAY HARDER THAN THAT, LITTLE BIRDIE.

I PLAY MUCH HARDER.

Kick snapped all the tendons in his knees. Regeneration takes time--he shouldn't be able to--

KRAAAAK

KRAAAAK

POP

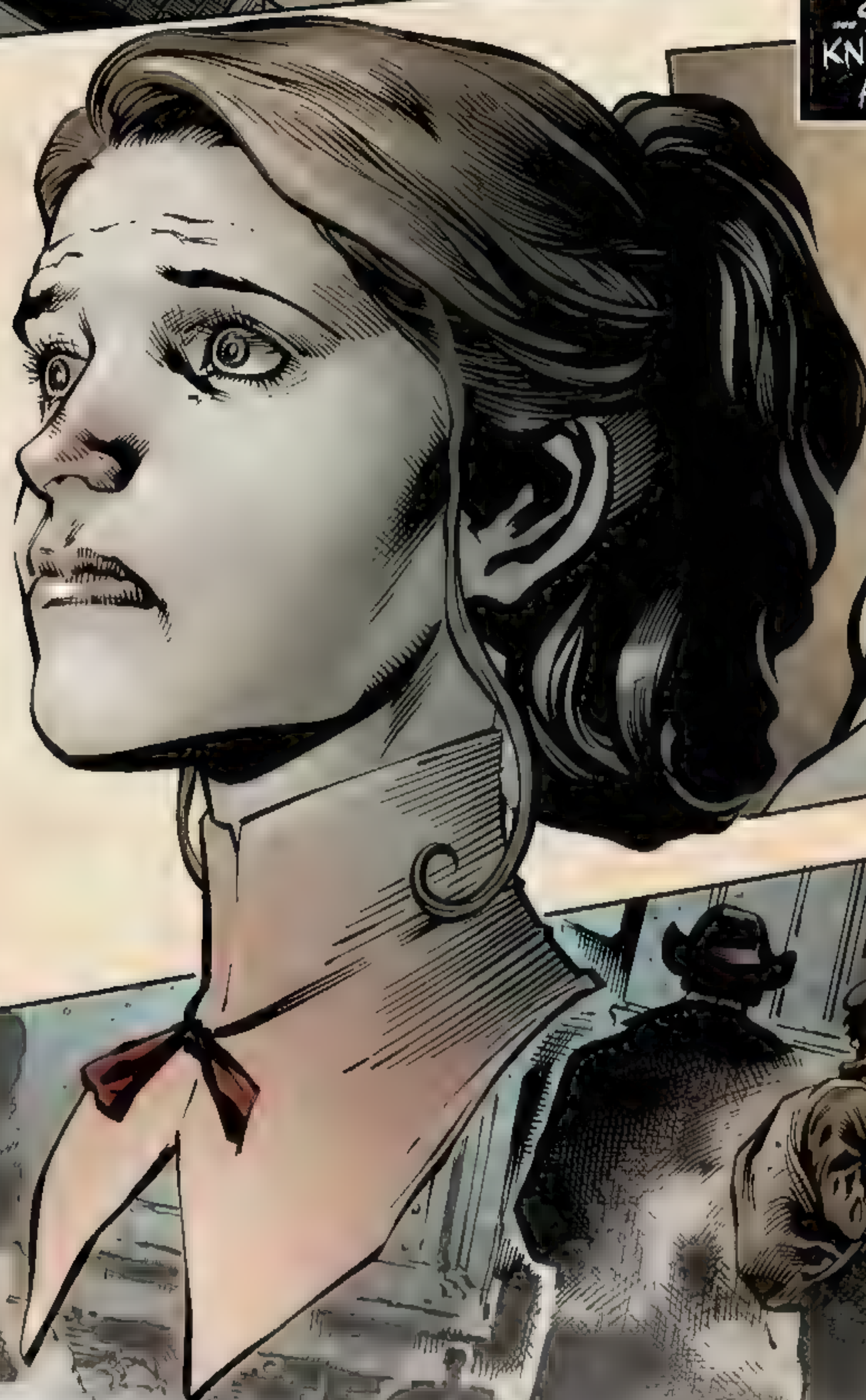
KRAK



HE'D HAD HIS EYE ON ME FOR WEEKS.

AND WHILE MY MOTHER WAS NOT PLEASED TO HEAR HOW I'D BEEN SPENDING MY DAYS...

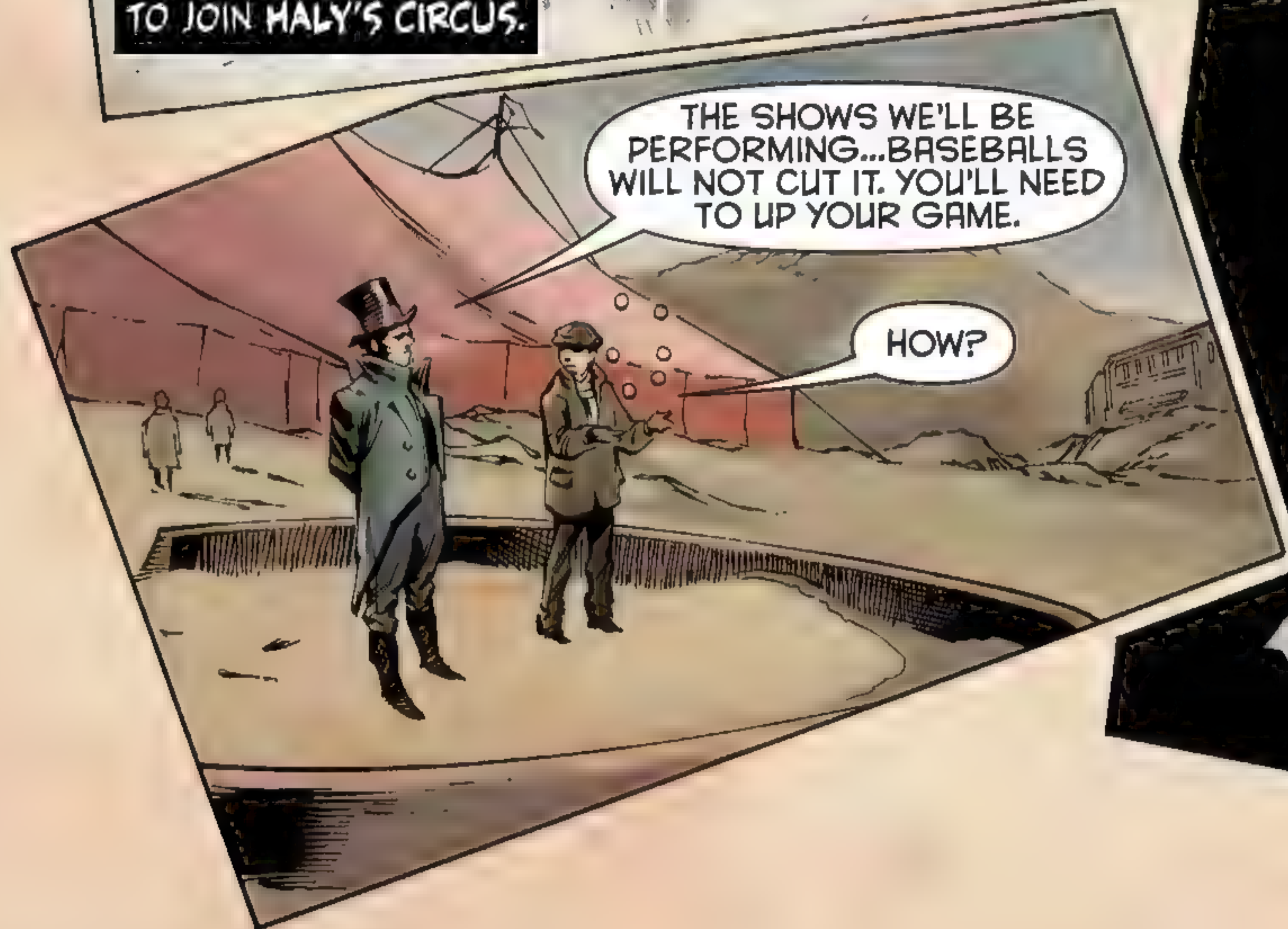
...SHE HAD KNOWN ALL ALONG.



MONEY WAS MONEY, AFTER ALL.



WHICH WAS THE VERY REASON THAT SHE AGREED TO LET THE RINGMASTER TAKE ME TO JOIN HALLY'S CIRCUS.



THE SHOWS WE'LL BE PERFORMING...BASEBALLS WILL NOT CUT IT. YOU'LL NEED TO UP YOUR GAME.

HOW?



BY PLAYING A BIT HARDER.

THE NEXT FEW
YEARS ARE A BIT
OF A BLUR.

CITY AFTER
CITY, NIGHT
AFTER NIGHT.

I HAD NOT
BECOME
GOOD...

...I HAD BECOME
SPECTACULAR.





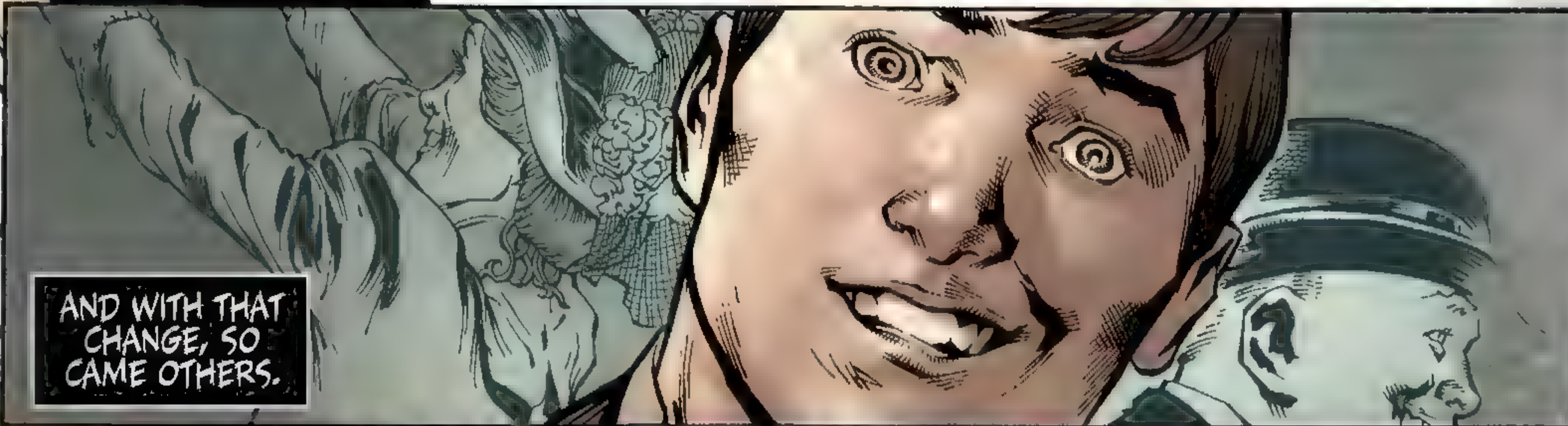
AS THE YEARS WENT BY,
MY REPUTATION GREW.



ONCE A CHILD
LIVING IN
GOTHAM...



I HAD MANAGED
TO BECOME A CHILD
OF GOTHAM.



AND WITH THAT
CHANGE, SO
CAME OTHERS.



HER NAME WAS AMELIA,
AND DURING ONE OF HALY'S
ANNUAL STAYS IN GOTHAM...



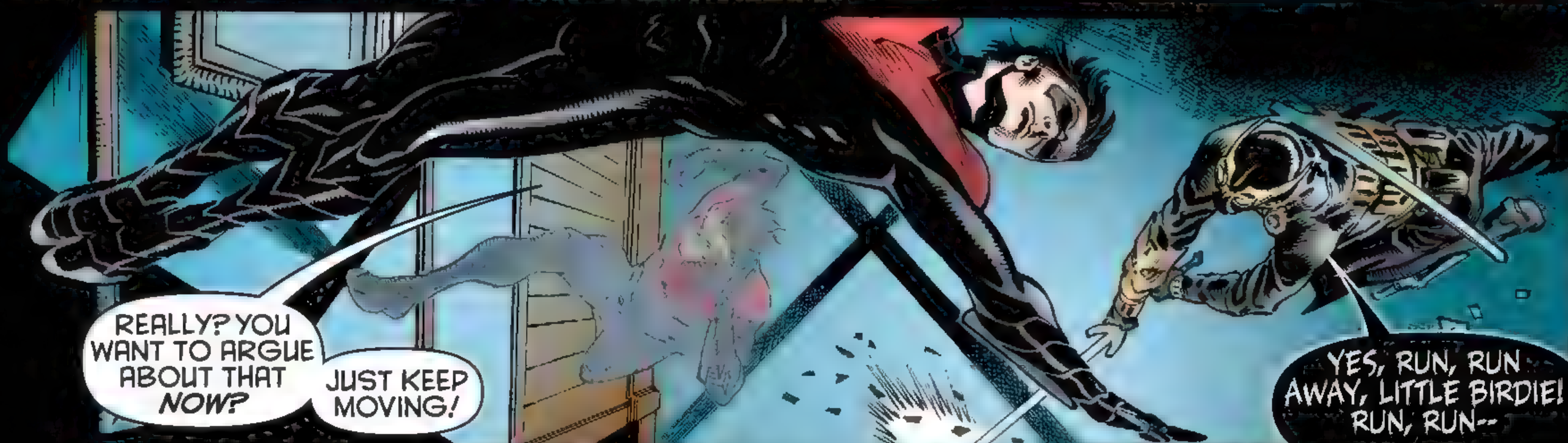
...WE FELL
IN LOVE.



WHAT--WHAT
IS THAT
THING?!

THEY CALL
IT A *TALON*--HE'S
AN ASSASSIN FOR
THE COURT OF
OWLS, HERE TO
KILL YOU!

THE COURT?! BUT
THAT'S A *FAIRY TALE*!
THEY'RE NOT *REAL*!



REALLY? YOU
WANT TO ARGUE
ABOUT THAT
NOW?

JUST KEEP
MOVING!

YES, RUN, RUN
AWAY, LITTLE BIRDIE!
RUN, RUN--



GHNI!

Need to keep him
occupied long enough
for the Mayor
to get out.

Long enough to
make sure no
one else dies
here today.



No matter
what it
takes.

SO...
WHERE
WERE
WE?

OH, YOU
WANT TO CHALLENGE
ME TO A SWORD FIGHT?
IS THAT IT?

I'VE BEEN
TRAINED BY THE BEST
FIGHTERS ON THE
PLANET.



GOOD.
SO HAVE
I.

SKLASH!

ARGH!

UHN!

...BUT
NOT NEARLY
GOOD
ENOUGH!

GAH!!

YOU'RE
GOOD...

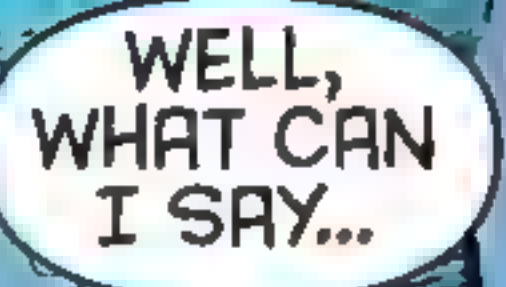
SHRKE



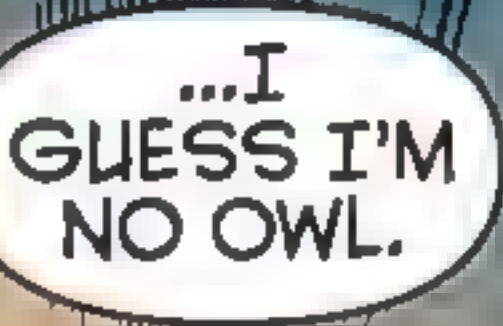
VERY DISAPPOINTING, LITTLE BIRDIE...



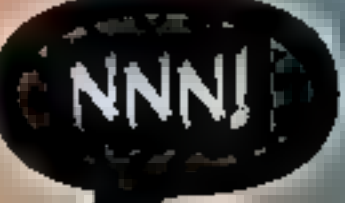
...VERY DISAPPOINTING INDEED.



WELL, WHAT CAN I SAY...



...I GUESS I'M NO OWL.



NNN!



YEAH... LET'S SEE YOU REGENERATE AROUND THAT...

ALTHOUGH SHE WAS THE
DAUGHTER OF BURTON
CROWNE, MY RELATIONSHIP
WITH AMELIA WAS EASY
FROM THE START.

WE WERE
HAPPY
TOGETHER.

TWO CHILDREN
IN LOVE.

IN HINDSIGHT,
THAT WAS REALLY
THE BEGINNING
OF THE END.

EVEN THOUGH
NEITHER OF US
KNEW IT.

IN THE MONTHS THAT
FOLLOWED, EVERYTHING
WAS STRIPPED AWAY.

AT THE TIME IT
FELT LIKE THE
ULTIMATE
BETRAYAL.

YOU
KILLED
HIM...?

HE WAS
ALREADY DEAD.
THE STICK'S
JUST PREVENTING
HIS HEALING
FACTOR FROM
KICKING IN.

STILL, WE
SHOULD
HURRY UP
AND--

WIIHAW!

HRK!

BUT IT WOULD BE
NOTHING COMPARED
TO THE BETRAYAL
I'LL WITNESS HERE
TONIGHT.

BECAUSE THIS
BETRAYAL TAKES
EVERYTHING I
SACRIFICED AND
MAKES IT
WORTHLESS.

THIS BETRAYAL IS
FROM MY OWN
DESCENDANT.
WHICH IS WHY I,
WILLIAM COBB...

NO...



...AM HERE TO
KILL RICHARD
GRAYSON.





NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 8:10 PM...

GOOTHAM CITY.

YES, WE'RE STILL HERE.

I KNOW I SAID WE'D BE IN AND OUT--JUST LONG ENOUGH TO SHUT DOWN SUZIE SU AND FREE THE HOSPITAL SHE HAD TAKEN HOSTAGE--

--BUT SOMETHING CAME UP.

GOOTHAM. THE "SOMETHING CAME UP" CAPITAL OF THE WORLD.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, JASON. IF YOU HATE **BATMAN** SO MUCH--

--WHY ARE YOU WILLING TO HELP HIM OUT?

THIS ISN'T ABOUT HIM, KORI.

IT'S ABOUT A CITY UNDER *SIEGE* BY A GROUP OF MANIACS KNOWN AS THE *COURT OF OWLS*.

IT ISN'T GOOTHAM'S FAULT BATMAN HAPPENS TO LIVE HERE.

THAT INFO DUMP FROM YOUR "FRIEND" ALFRED HAS BROUGHT US RIGHT TO *VICTOR FRIES'* DOORSTEP.

MAYBE WE GOT HERE BEFORE THE *TALON ASSASSIN-THINGIE* DID...?

NO...

NIGHT OF THE OWLS

JASON TODD, A FORMER ROBIN TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD AROUND HIM. ROY HARPER, A SELF-PROFESSED "RECOVERING SUPER-HERO" TAKING IT ONE DAY AT A TIME. KORIAND'R, A SLAVE PRINCESS FROM ANOTHER WORLD WHO WILL NEVER BE CHAINED AGAIN. DON'T CALL THEM HEROES. DON'T CALL THEM A TEAM. CALL THEM...

RED HEAD AND THE OUTLAWS

WHO ARE YOU?--

--HOO? HOO?



IT'S PRETTY
CLEAR MR.
FREEZE KNOWS
THE COURT IS
AFTER HIM.

THE LUNATIC
HAS TURNED
CHINATOWN INTO
HIS OWN PRIVATE
BUNKER.

I WILL
SAY THIS
FOR THE MAN'S
WORK--IT IS A
THING OF
BEAUTY.

BUT I CANNOT
IMAGINE IT IS
HEALTHY FOR THE
PEOPLE LIVING
BELOW.



TALK ABOUT
THE LESSER OF
TWO SUCKS.

WE HAVE TO
PROTECT *VICTOR
FRIES* FROM THE
COURT OF
OWLS--

WRITTEN BY SCOTT LOBDELL
ART BY KENNETH ROCAFORT
COLORING BY BLOND
LETTERING BY DEZI SIENY



...EVEN AS WE
PROTECT THE
CITY FROM MR.
FREEZE?

YEAH,
BASICALLY.

JASON--
WHERE ARE YOU
GOING?!

HE'S
FINE.

ROY
GETS IT.

I JUST NEED A
MOMENT ALONE.

WITH
HER.

WITH
GOTHAM.

I WAS
BORN HERE.

RAISED
HERE.

PROBABLY
WOULD HAVE
DIED HERE...

IF I HADN'T BEEN
KILLED SOME-
WHERE ELSE.

BUT I'M
BACK.

AND DESPITE
THE WAY IT
LOOKS FROM
HERE--

SHHKRT


THAK

CERTAINLY NOT BY A
BUNCH OF RICH FOLKS
WHO FASHION
THEMSELVES AFTER AN
OLD NURSERY RHYME.

HOW DOES IT GO
AGAIN? IT'S BEEN
SO LONG.

--I HAVE NO
INTENTION OF
DYING AGAIN ANY
TIME SOON.

BEWARE THE COURT OF OWLS,
THAT WATCHES ALL THE TIME,
RULING GOTHAM FROM A SHAD-
OWED PERCH, BEHIND GRANITE AND
LIME. THEY WATCH YOU AT YOUR
HEARTH, THEY WATCH YOU IN YOUR
BED, SPEAK NOT A WHISPERED WORD
OF THEM, OR THEY'LL SEND THE
TALON FOR YOUR HEAD.



IT SHOULD BE A
SIMPLE MATTER TO
LOCATE MR. FREEZE
AND DISPATCH HIM
BEFORE ANYONE
GETS HURT.

DEFINE
"DISPATCH."

DON'T
BOTHER.

YOU TWO GET AS
MANY PEOPLE AS YOU
CAN FAR AWAY FROM
HERE, QUICKLY.

I'LL STOP THE
ASSASSIN FROM KILLING
MR. FREEZE AND TALK
THIS PSYCHOTIC
SNOWMAN INTO SCALING
BACK THE ICE
SHOW.

SHOULDN'T
WE ALL GO IN
TOGETHER?

NO, BECAUSE
WE'RE NOT
"TOGETHER."

I AM HERE ON
FAMILY BUSINESS
AND YOU TWO
TAGGED ALONG.

TOUCHY,
TOUCHY.

ROY, DOES HE
GET LIKE *THIS*
WHENEVER HE
ANSWERS ONE OF
BATMAN'S
CALLS?

I LIKED IT SO
MUCH BETTER
WHEN YOU TWO
DIDN'T KNOW
EACH OTHER.

GO!

THIS ICE WILL
NOT STAND
LONG AGAINST
THE HEAT OF MY
BODY.

I
KNOW FIRST-
HAND--

--HOW THAT
ICE FEELS. IN A *NICE*
WAY.

MAYBE KORI
AND ROY
ARE RIGHT.

MAYBE BEING
"HOME" AGAIN
MAKES ME...

...ANXIOUS?

CONFUSED?

AMBIVALENT?

WHO COULD
BLAME ME?

AFTER ALL THE
TIMES I MADE
THINGS DIFFICULT
FOR BATMAN--

--NOW SUDDENLY
I'M ANSWERING A
CALL TO ARMS
FROM ALFRED?

IF IT WASN'T
FOR THE ICE
CASTLE HERE...

...I WOULD THINK THIS
WHOLE THING WAS A
SETUP TO GET ME
ARRESTED OR--

HOW *DARE*
YOU RAISE
YOUR HAND
TO ME!

NOPE.

NOT A

SETUP!

HMM.
WRONG
FLOOR?

I WILL KILL
YOU FOR THIS
AFFRONT!

WRONG
FLOOR.
SO OFF
MY GAME.



NO, IT IS YOU WHO WILL DIE THIS NIGHT, FRIES!

NOW THAT YOU'VE CHOSEN TO NO LONGER SERVE THE COURT OF OWLS!

I NEVER SERVED YOUR FOOLISH COURT!

MR. FREEZE SERVES NO MAN!



DON'T CARE WHO DID WHAT TO WHO OR WHY--

--BUT THIS ENDS HERE AND NOW!

YOU ARE THE RED HOOD, NO?

WHY WOULD YOU INVOLVE YOURSELF IN THIS MATTER?!

HE MUST BE AN ALLY OF THE BATMAN!

BLAM
BLAM



I SHOULD BLOW YOUR HEAD OFF JUST FOR SAYING THAT OUT LOUD, TALON.

BUT TO ANSWER *BOTH* YOUR QUESTIONS, I'M JUST A CONCERNED CITIZEN.

NOW YOU TWO ARE GOING TO BREAK THIS UP--

--OR I'M GOING TO DO IT *FOR* YOU.

MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE COURT HAS DISPATCHED DOZENS OF TALONS TO KILL AS MANY GOTHAM POWER BROKERS AS POSSIBLE.

GO RESCUE ONE OF *THEM*.

IT IS NOT LIKE I AM
SOME *DEFENSELESS*
IDIOT WHO NEEDS
THE PROTECTION OF
BATMAN!

IS HE JUST
BEING
ARROGANT--

--OR JUST
TRYING TO
PUSH MY
BUTTONS?

LET ME MAKE
MY POINT IN A
WAY YOU WILL
UNDERSTAND!

OW! YOU
MORON--

--WHAT PART
OF "I'M HERE TO
HELP" WAS TOO
VAGUE?

DON'T MAKE THE
SAME MISTAKE
EVERYONE ELSE
HAS MADE BEFORE
YOU, FREEZE.

I'M NOT ONE
OF THE GOOD
GUYS!

ULPHN!

APPARENTLY--

--OR YOU
WOULDN'T HAVE
LET THAT ASSASSIN
ESCAPE!

KLUNK!

DAMMIT.

I'LL BE
RIGHT BACK.

IF YOU MAKE
ME TRACK
YOU DOWN--

--I'LL KILL YOU
MYSELF.

YO,
TALON--

--THIS
WON'T TAKE A
MOMENT.

I JUST HAVE
TO KILL YOU
AND GET BACK
TO MR. FREEZE.

TOO LATE,
I'M AFRAID.

?! HOW
SO?

YOU DO
NOT KNOW?

MANY WHO HAVE
SERVED THE COURT OF
OWLS HAVE HAD THE
HONOR OF GIVING
THEIR LIVES AS A
TALON--

--WHETHER WE
HAVE DIED IN THE
LINE OF DUTY--

--OR BEEN
RETIRED AFTER OUR
ALL TOO BRIEF
TENURE.

ON THIS NIGHT
ALONE WE HAVE
RISEN AGAIN TO
SMITE OUR MASTERS'
ENEMIES!

DEAD AND
BACK?

KIND OF WISH I HAD
THAT INFORMATION
BEFORE I GOT INTO
THIS MESS...

...CONSIDERING MY
OWN EXPERIENCE WITH
RESURRECTION.

YOU ARE A
FOOL TO STAND
BETWEEN ME AND
MY PREY. FALL!

I'M NOT
MUCH OF A
DIRECTION-
FOLLOWER.
SORRY.

HOLY--?!

NO KNIFE SHOULD
BE ABLE TO CRACK
MY HOOD. ONE
MORE SWIPE AND--

SERIOUSLY?

THIS IS YOUR
BIG SECOND
ACT?
YOU GET THE
CHANCE TO
COME BACK
TO LIFE--

--AND THE ONLY
THING THAT
COMES TO MIND
IS "ASSASSIN"?

I KNOW MY
PLACE AS A
SERVANT OF THE
COURT!

NOW SHUT
UP AND--

DIIEEEEE?!

NICE AIM,
ROY.

SOMEONE IS
FOOLISH ENOUGH TO
ATTEMPT TO RESCUE
YOU?!

HE HAS
TO.
I'M THE
DESIGNATED
DRIVER.

KRAKT

I JUST HIT HIM
WITH EVERY-
THING I HAVE--

--AND NEARLY
CRUSHED MY
WRIST IN THE
PROCESS.

THIS IS GOING
TO BE A LOT
HARDER THAN I
THOUGHT...



HE IS GETTING AWAY. SHOULD I INCINERATE HIM?

NO! I'VE GOT IT. IF YOU TWO ARE DONE EVACUATING--I NEED BOTH OF YOU UP TOP TO DEAL WITH THIS FREEZING AT THE **SOURCE**.

JASON--?!

I'M FINE--STAY WITH KORI!

NO ARGUMENT THERE. BUT YOU'RE GOING TO NEED BOTH HANDS...



RIGHT. THANKS.

Tssst

SOMETIMES ROY PLAYS THE CLOWN SO WELL--

--I FORGET HOW BRILLIANT HE IS AT MAKING WEAPONS.



YOU CAN RELAX, MR. FRIES.

YOU ARE NOW UNDER THE PROTECTION OF PRINCESS KORIAND'R OF THE PLANET--

X'HAL!

WAAAAH!



PRINCESS?

SREK KE'S RU, GRAR-RRRU...

YOU NEED TO FOCUS--REMEMBER, WE'RE HERE TO STOP FRIES, NOT TO FRY HIM!

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO KEEP HIM ALIVE IN THE PROCESS.

USRURK TRE' TRISK'R TURRO!

UM...BLINK IF I'M GETTING THROUGH TO YOU AT ALL?



THAT GUY
WENT THIS
WAY--

--RIGHT BY THAT
OLD, LONG FADED
BILLBOARD FOR
HALY'S CIRCUS.

IS THAT A
COINCIDENCE?

BECAUSE
HE CERTAINLY
CARRIES
HIMSELF LIKE
AN... ACROBAT?

NO, NOT
LIKE.

THE FLOURISH,
THE FLAIR--

--HE WAS AN
ACROBAT.

AND ISN'T HALY'S
THE SAME CIRCUS
THAT GAVE US DICK
GRAYSON ONCE
UPON A TIME?

HE CAME THIS
WAY FOR A
REASON... Hmm...

THIS EMPTY
LOT MEANS
SOMETHING TO
YOU--DOESN'T
IT, TALON?

WHAT--? I
DON'T...

DON'T TALK
AS IF YOU
KNOW ME, RED
HOOD!

YOU
LED ME
HERE...

WHY?

I DID
NO SUCH
THING.

YOU'RE
LYING.

THIS IS THE VACANT
LOT WHERE HALY'S
MUST HAVE PITCHED
THEIR BIG TENT.

LET ME GUESS, YOU RAN
AWAY AND JOINED THE
CIRCUS 'CAUSE YOU
BELIEVED THE LINE THEY FEED
EVERY TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY--

--THAT IT'S ALL MAGIC AND
SAWDUST AND UNICORN
POOP WHERE ALL THINGS
ARE POSSIBLE.

WHAT
HAPPENED,
TALON?

WHAT DID THE
COURT DO TO
YOU HERE--

WHAT MADE A YOUNG
CIRCUS PERFORMER SIGN
AWAY HIS BODY AND
SOUL TO THE COURT
OF OWLS?

NO,
NOT MY
SOUL.

MY BODY,
YES--

--WHICH
BECAME A
MOCKERY UPON
MY RETURN TO
LIFE.

BUT
NEVER MY
SOUL.

YOU'RE
PREACHING TO
THE CHOIR.

I'VE BEEN
TO THE OTHER
SIDE AND
BACK.

SOMEONE TELL ME
I'M NOT HAVING A
HEART-TO-HEART
WITH A REANIMATED
ASSASSIN.

MEANWHILE...

I AM AT ONCE
IMPRESSED AND
REPULSED...

...THAT A HUMAN
OF YOUR ADVANCED
INTELLECT WOULD
CHOOSE TO USE YOUR
TECHNOLOGY FOR
SUCH HORRID
ENDS.

YOU KNOW
NOTHING ABOUT
ME, GIRL!

EVERY-
THING I DO IS
MOTIVATED BY
LOVE.

LOVE?!

LOVE
DOESN'T LEAVE
PAIN TO THE
WORLD, MR.
FREEZE!

IT DOES NOT
LEAVE SUFFERING
AND DEATH IN
ITS WAKE!


UM,
PRINCESS?

CAN
YOU SCALE
BACK THE FIRE-
WORKS...

JUST TO,
YOU KNOW, AVOID
THE APOCALYPSE?

IF YOU
TRULY BELIEVE
WHAT YOU ARE
SAYING, MR.
FREEZE...

THEN WHAT
I FEEL FOR YOU
IS NOTHING
MORE THAN
PITY!



DO YOU THINK
I WOULD HAVE
WORKED ON BEHALF
OF THE COURT OF
OWLS IF I HAD
KNOWN--

--THAT THEY
WOULD USE MY
EXPERIMENTS TO
REANIMATE THEIR
LEGION OF
TALONS?!

I THINK
IT COSTS A
SMALL FORTUNE
TO KEEP THIS LAB
OPERATIONAL...

...TO CONTINUE
YOUR EXPERIMENTS
FOR WHATEVER
REASON.

I THINK YOU
DON'T GIVE A
DAMN WHERE THAT
MONEY COMES
FROM.

OR HOW MANY
PEOPLE GET HURT IN
THE COURSE OF YOUR
CAMPAIGN, NO MATTER
HOW NOBLE OR SELF-
JUSTIFYING.

THEY
PRESENTED
THEMSELVES AS
BUSINESSMEN
WITH A MUTUAL
INTEREST...

*THE
END OF THE
BATMAN.*

TRUST ME,
"PRINCESS"...WHEN
ALL THIS IS OVER
AND YOUR BONES
HAVE SHATTERED
FROM THE
COLD--

--I WILL
HAVE MY REVENGE
AGAINST THOSE WHO
SOUGHT TO USE ME,
AND THEN DISPOSE OF
ME WHEN THEY
WERE DONE!

LET'S
SKIP
AHEAD--

--TO THE
"WHEN THIS
IS OVER"
PART.

THUNK

PLEASE.
I'VE BEEN HIT
BY A SPEEDING
BATMOBILE.

WHAT KIND OF
DAMAGE DO YOU
THINK AN *ARROW*
WILL DO?

ABOUT 1.21
GIGAWATTS'
WORTH.

TISSAAAA

HE DOESN'T
LOOK PARTICULARLY
RESCUED, ROY.

SAYS
THE GIRL WHO
TRIED TO *CHAR-*
BROIL HIM.

HE
SHOULD BE OUT
COLD LONG ENOUGH
TO GET HIM INTO A
NICE, COZY ARKHAM
CELL.

HOW UNFORTUNATE.

I GET THE
SENSE THAT HE IS NOT
MAD--AS MUCH AS
HE IS TERRIBLY AND
TRAGICALLY
MISGUIDED.

HAD HIS
LIFE HAD TAKEN A
DIFFERENT COURSE,
VICTOR FRIES COULD
HAVE CONTRIBUTED
IMMEASURABLY
TO THE WORLD
AROUND HIM.



UM...
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?

MY
NAME IS XIAO
LOONG. THIS IS
MY FACE.

AS A CHILD I
WAS FORGED INTO
A WEAPON--MY EVERY
THOUGHT AND DEED
DICTATED BY THE
COURT.

EVEN MY DEATH
CAME AT A TIME AND
PLACE OF THEIR
CHOOSING.

THIS
TIME I WANT
A SAY IN MY
EXECUTION.



YOU AND
I ARE MORE
ALIKE THAN
YOU REALIZE,
XIAO.

I
WAS DEAD
ONCE.

I GET IT--
STARTING
OVER IS SCARY
AS HELL.



I DON'T
WANT TO START
AGAIN.

I WANT
TO END THIS
"LIFE" ON MY
TERMS.

SURELY
YOU CAN
UNDERSTAND
THAT.



PLEASE.

SHE CALLS
HERSELF
BATGIRL.

FOR REASONS
I'LL NEVER
UNDERSTAND...
SHE CHOSE
THIS LIFE.

WHICH IS WHY SHE'S
STANDING HERE ON
THE ROOFTOP OF THE
POLICE STATION--

--STANDING VIGIL
FOR A MAN WHO
MIGHT NEVER
RETURN.

TOOK OUT MY
TALON AND
DRAGGED HER
UP HERE.

CHECK. REPLACED THE
"OWL SIGNAL"
WITH THE BAT
SIGNAL.

CHECK.

WAIT ON
BATMAN TO SEE
IF HE'S OKAY
AND THEN GO
HELP THE BIRDS
OF PREY...?

...C'MON,
BRUCE...

NICE
LEGS.

YOU HAVE
TWO SECONDS
TO GIVE ME ONE
REASON WHY I DON'T
TOSS YOU OFF THIS
ROOFTOP.

MR.
FREEZE?!

HE WAS ONE
OF THE COURT'S
TARGETS. ARE
YOU TELLING
ME THAT
YOU--?

--GOT TO PLAY
THE REINDEER
GAMES?

HEY, EVEN
I CAN BE A NICE
GUY FOR ONE
NIGHT OF THE
YEAR.



DON'T THINK
THIS ABSOLVES YOU
OF EVERY OTHER
INSANE ACT YOU'VE
EVER COMMITTED,
RED HOOD.

IF I EVER SEE
YOU HERE IN THIS
CITY AGAIN, YOU'RE
GOING TO FIND
YOURSELF IN THE
CELL *NEXT* TO MR.
FREEZE.

BETTER
BATS THAN YOU
HAVE TRIED,
BARBIE.

SPEAKING
OF, IF BRUCE
SURVIVES THIS
NIGHT...?

TELL
HIM HE'S
WELCOME.





The first members of my family to live in the manor were Solomon and Joshua Wayne--brothers. They bought the house in 1855.

But they didn't move in until two years later.



The reason was bats.

A massive infestation of bats in the cave system beneath the land.



They brought in a chiroptologist from Gotham University, and according to him, to get rid of the bats, they'd have to introduce a predator into the cave.

So the Wayne brothers did.



They carted in all sorts of birds, from Peregrine Falcons to kestrels, and unleashed them in different sections of the cave.

The most effective killers of bats, though, were the tiger owls.

My ancestors let owls loose in the cave...

NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 7:51 PM...

...and within a year, all
the bats were gone.

ALFRED. HOW
ARE WE DOING ON
TEMPERATURE?

DC COMICS presents BATMAN in

NIGHT of the OWLS

I'M
DROPPING IT
AS FAST AS
POSSIBLE,
SIR.

SCOTT SNYDER
writer

GREG CAPULLO
penciller

JONATHAN GLAPION
inker

FCO
PLASCENCIA
colorist

RICHARD STARKINGS and
COMICRAFT'S JIMMY B
lettering



IT
NEEDS TO BE
FASTER.

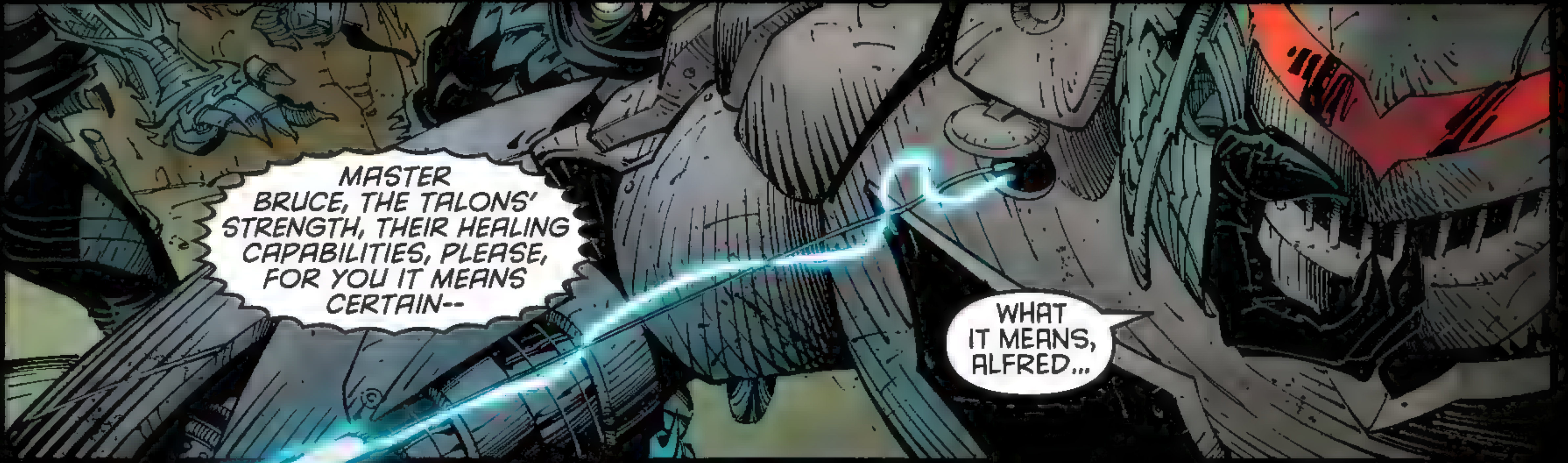
IT SHOULD DIP
BELOW ZERO IN NO
MORE THAN A MINUTE.
DROP TO NEGATIVE
TWENTY, MAYBE EVEN
THIRTY, IN UNDER FIVE
MINUTES.

BY THEN THE RESTORATIVE
COMPOUND IN THE TALONS'
CELLS SHOULD BEGIN TO
FREEZE. BUT SIR, I **IMPLORE**
YOU, COME BACK INSIDE
THE ARMORY!

THEY'RE
STRONG, ALFRED.
THE DOORS WON'T
KEEP THEM OUT
LONG ENOUGH.

THE
DOORS
MAY!

NO.



MASTER
BRUCE, THE TALONS'
STRENGTH, THEIR HEALING
CAPABILITIES, PLEASE,
FOR YOU IT MEANS
CERTAIN--

WHAT
IT MEANS,
ALFRED...



...IS THAT
I CAN PLAY
ROUGH FOR
ONCE.

My suit is built for war.

It's made of meta-aramid fibers of my own design, tougher than Kevlar.

Made to withstand burning heat and freezing cold-- temperatures as low as the Arctic winter.

It uses a semi-solid flow micro battery. It has enough oxygen for weeks.

Meaning, it's built for battle in the most alien territories on Earth.

And I'm wearing it here. In my own home.

COME ON!

I SAID COME ON, YOU UNDER SONS OF--



Alfred is right...

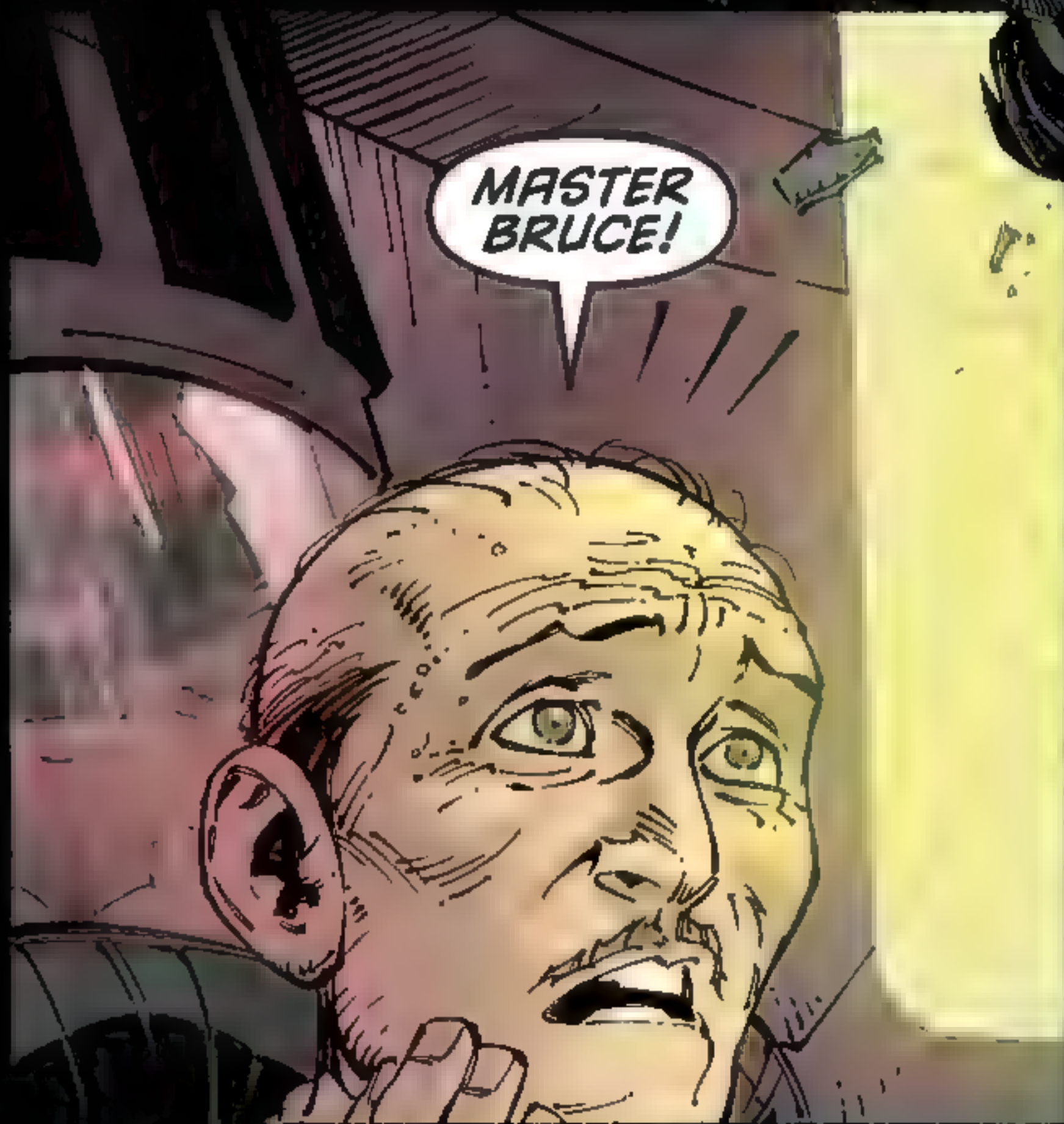


CLANG

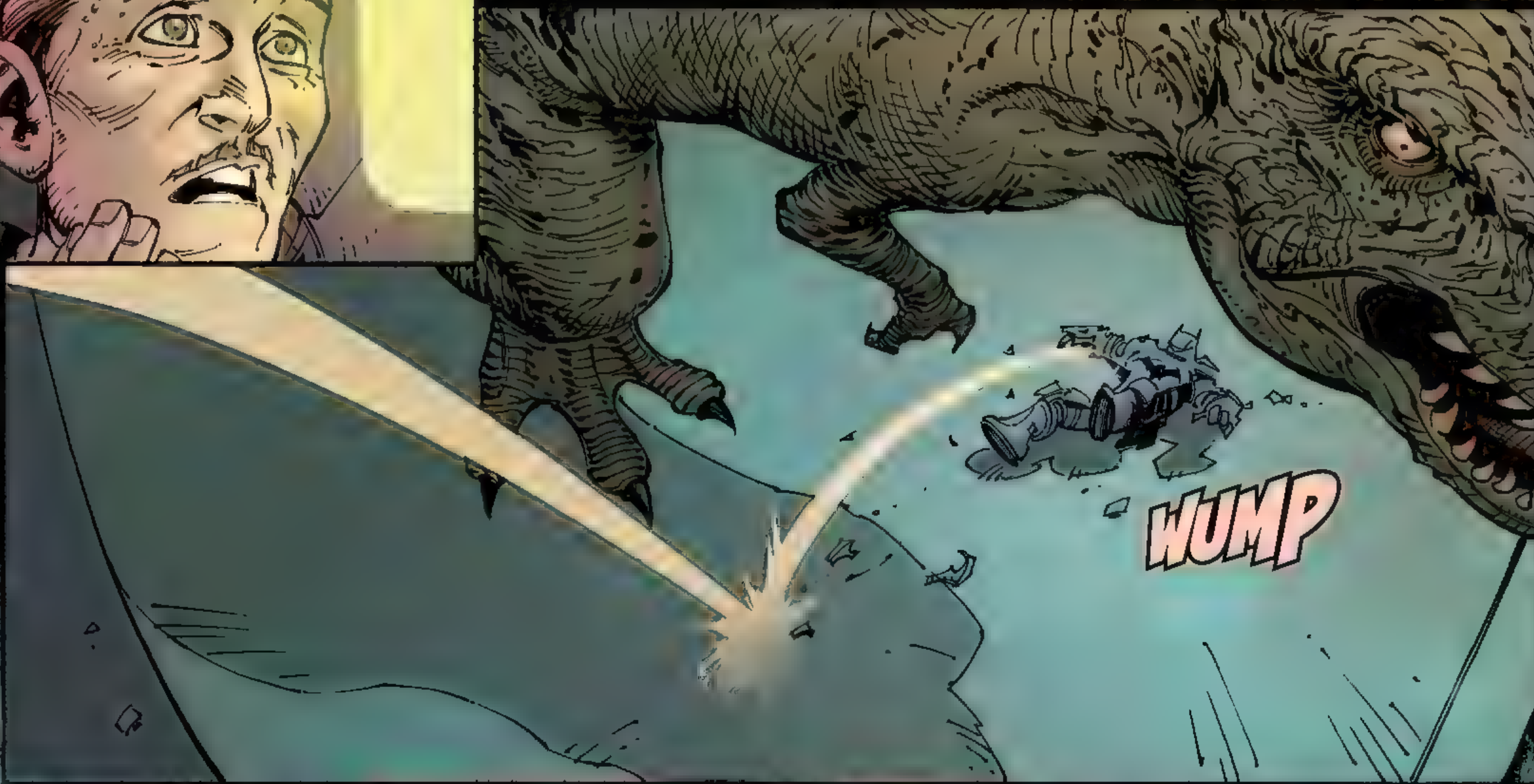


...they'll get through the suit, the Talons.

Because in a way, they already have.



MASTER BRUCE!



WUMP



HE'S DOWN, BROTHERS!

GET HIM!



THIS IS IT, BRUCE WAYNE.

NOTHING LEFT TO KEEP US OUT, NO MORE BARRIERS.



THE COURT ALWAYS FINDS A WAY INTO YOUR HOME!



YOU WAYNES ALWAYS TRY, THOUGH, DON'T YOU?



WELL, GO AHEAD! TRY WHATEVER YOU LIKE!

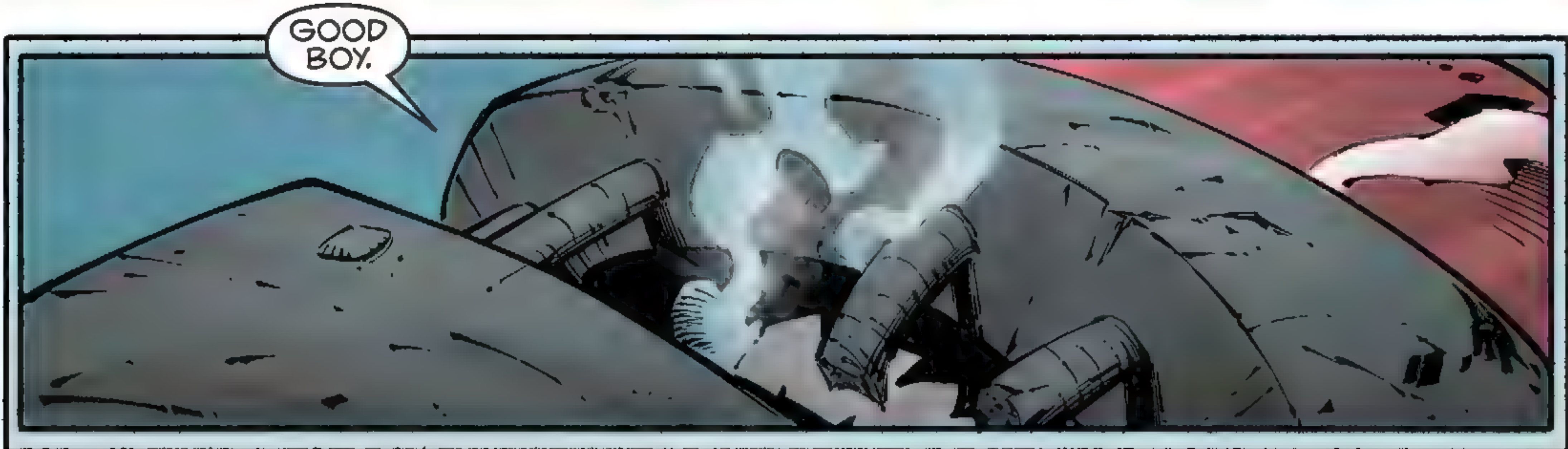
MORE GATES. MORE ALARMS.

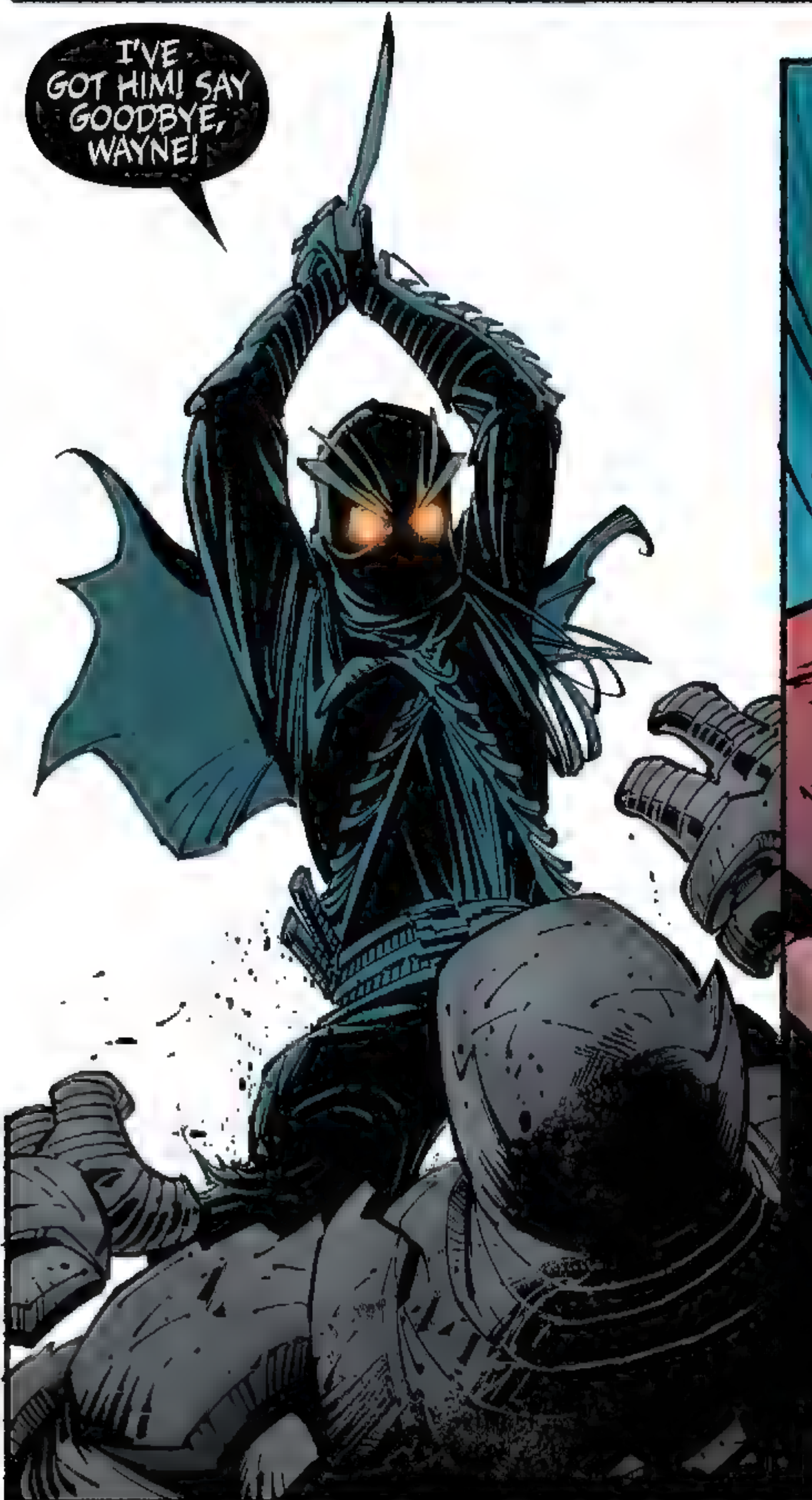
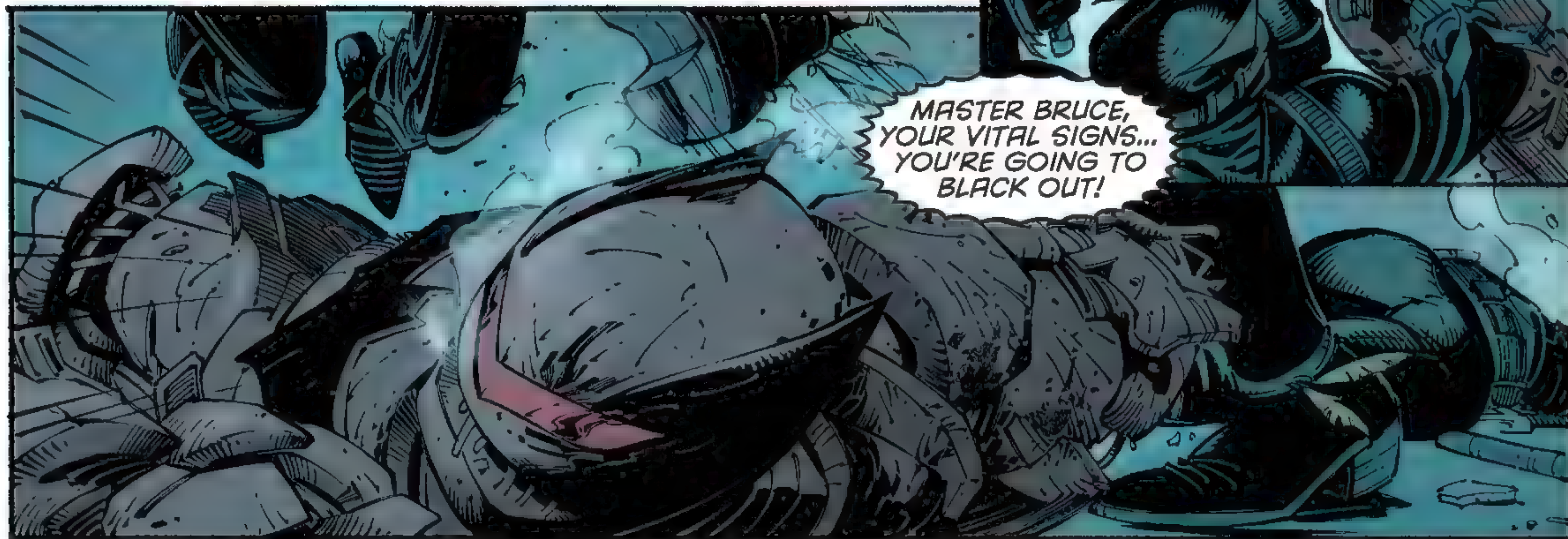


(HEH) MAYBE TRY A GUARD DOG.



ACTUALLY, ~~SKOFF~~ I ALREADY HAVE ONE.





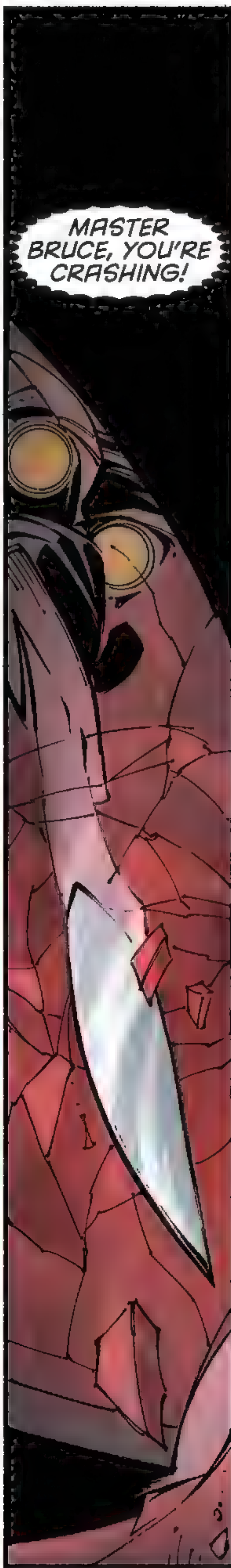


ARMORY
DOORS--

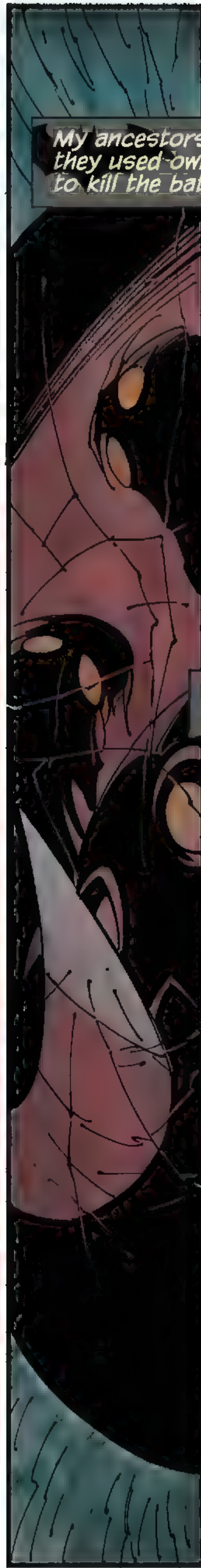
NO! OVERRIDE
ARMORY DOORS!
LOCK DOWN!



NO!
MASTER
BRUCE!



MASTER
BRUCE, YOU'RE
CRASHING!



My ancestors...
they used owls
to kill the bats.



Owls
everywhere.

But I forgot...
the thing I
forgot is...

...as soon as
the owls left...

...the bats...

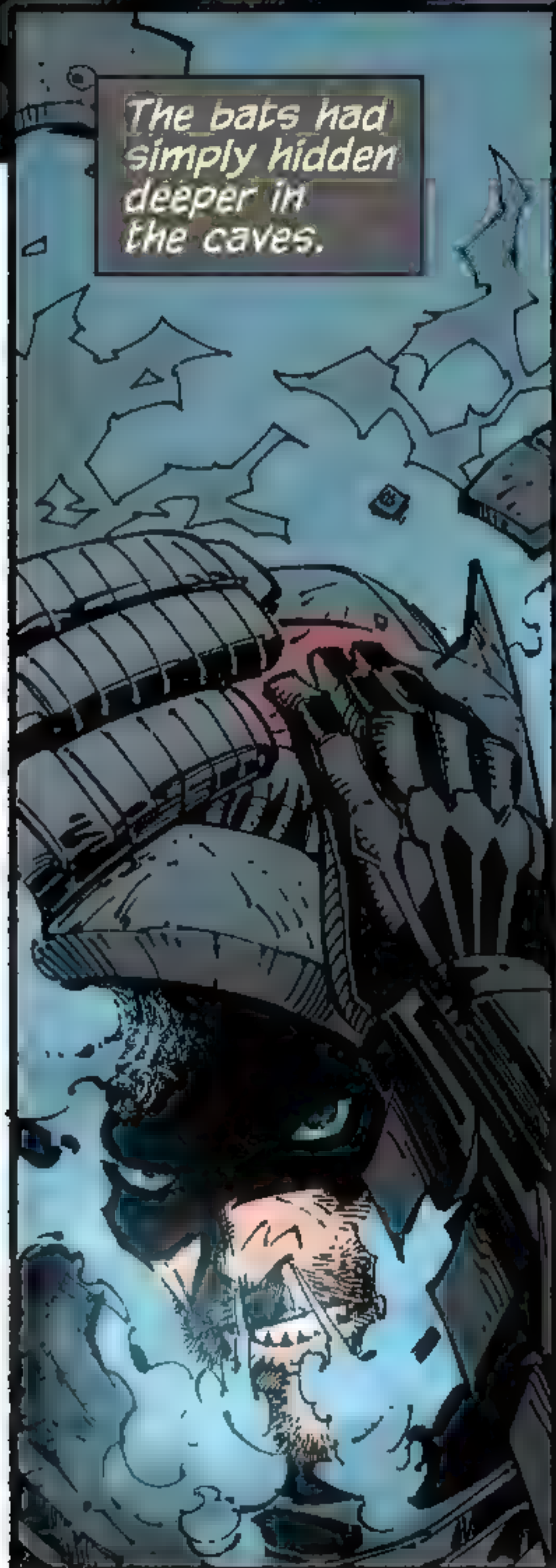
...came back





Yes...

...I remember now.



The bats had simply hidden deeper in the caves.



In the darkest parts, the parts the owls couldn't tolerate.

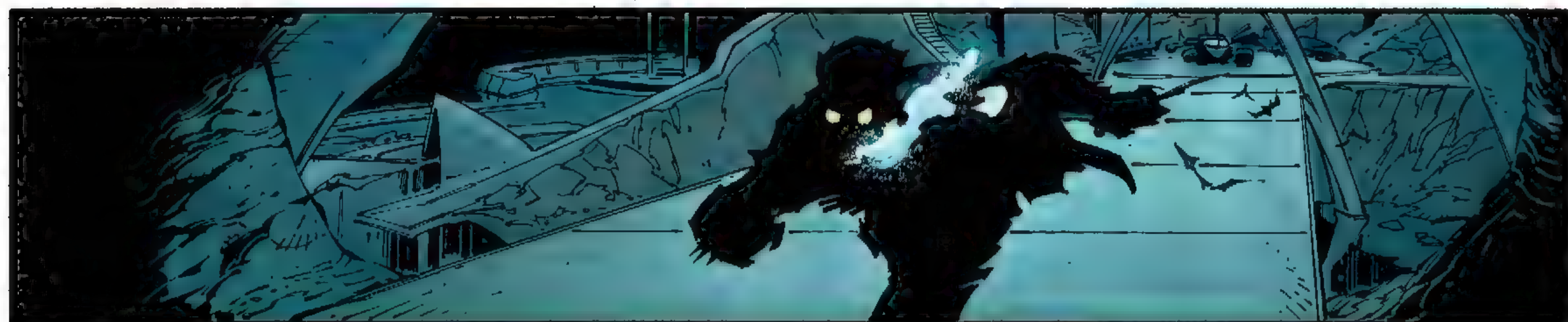


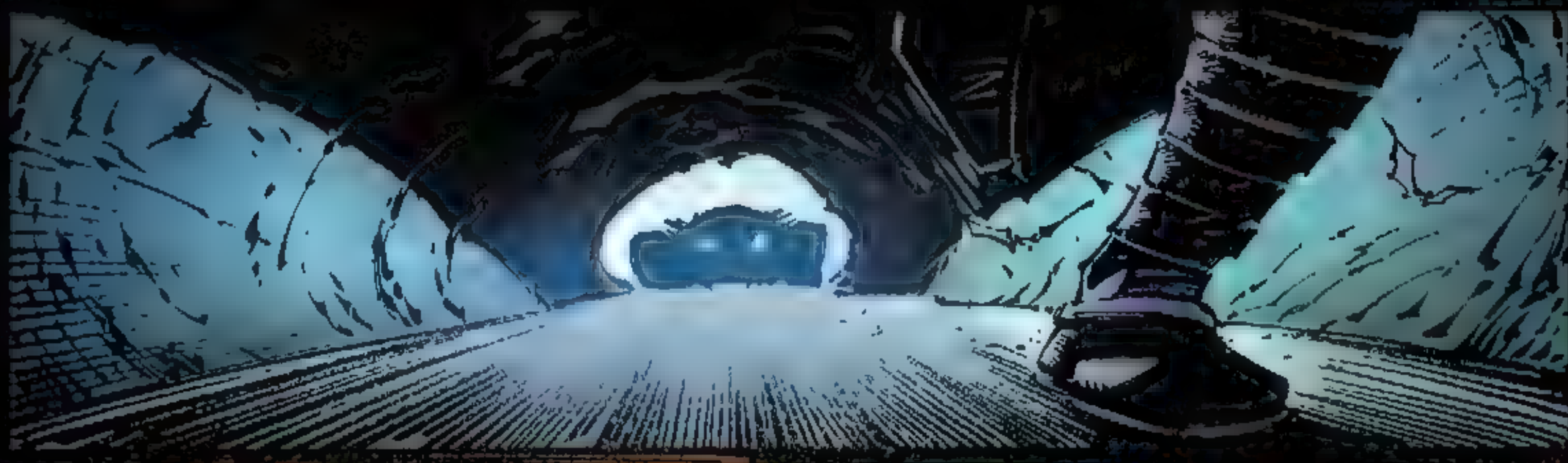
And when the bats came back...



...it was with a vengeance.







AAAACH!



SIR...!

HE'S GOT
A HEALING
FACTOR.

LET HIM
HEAL.



USE
THE COOLANT
I PREPARED
FOR COBB TO
FREEZE THE
TALONS.

YES,
SIR. BUT
YOU MUST
STAY HERE
AND--

THERE'S AN
OWL SYMBOL
IN THE SKY OVER
GOTHAM, ALFRED.
I'M GOING
OUT.



NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 8:36 PM

THE LIST
OF PEOPLE THE
COURT OF OWLS IS
TARGETING...

I'M SENDING
IT TO THE MAIN
CONSOLE. THE NAMES
IN BLUE, THEY'RE THE
ONES THE ALLIES HAVE
ALREADY GONE TO
PROTECT.

AND
THE ONES IN
RED?

I'M AFRAID
FOR THEM IT'S
ALREADY TOO LATE.
THE GREEN NAMES.
THEY'RE THE ONLY
TARGETS STILL
UNACCOUNTED
FOR.

THERE ARE
BARELY ANY GREEN,
ALFRED. JUST
JEREMIAH ARKHAM
AND LINCOLN
MARCH.

"I'M AFRAID THIS NIGHT
LARGELY BELONGS
TO THE OWLS, SIR."

"THE NIGHT'S
NOT OVER YET."

"I'M GOING
TO ARKHAM
ASYLUM FIRST."

NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 11:02 PM

"AND THEN I'LL
GO AFTER MARCH."

LINCOLN
MARCH!
I'M
HERE TO HELP!
MARCH?!

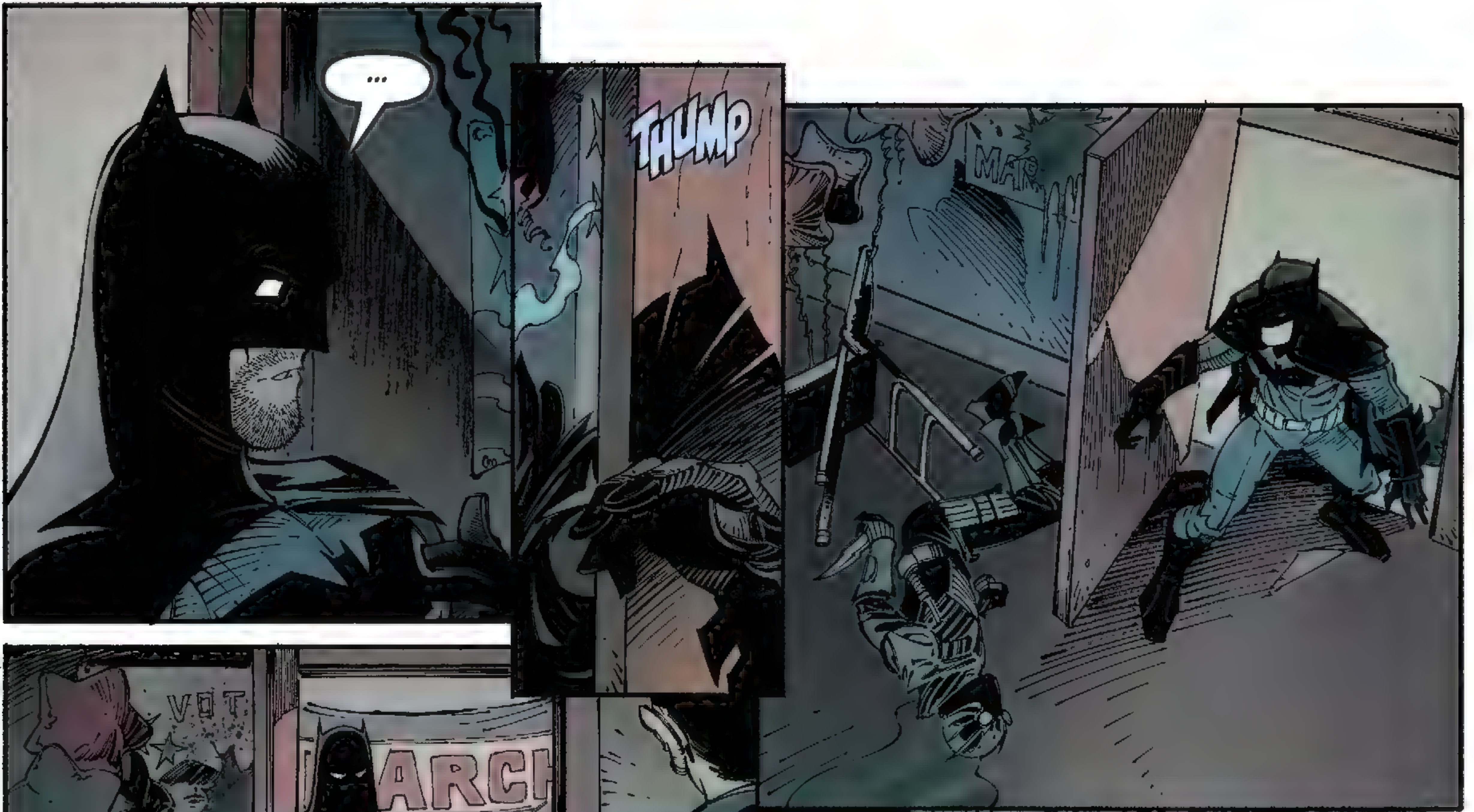


...BRUCE WAYNE...

MR. MARCH, I--

YOU...

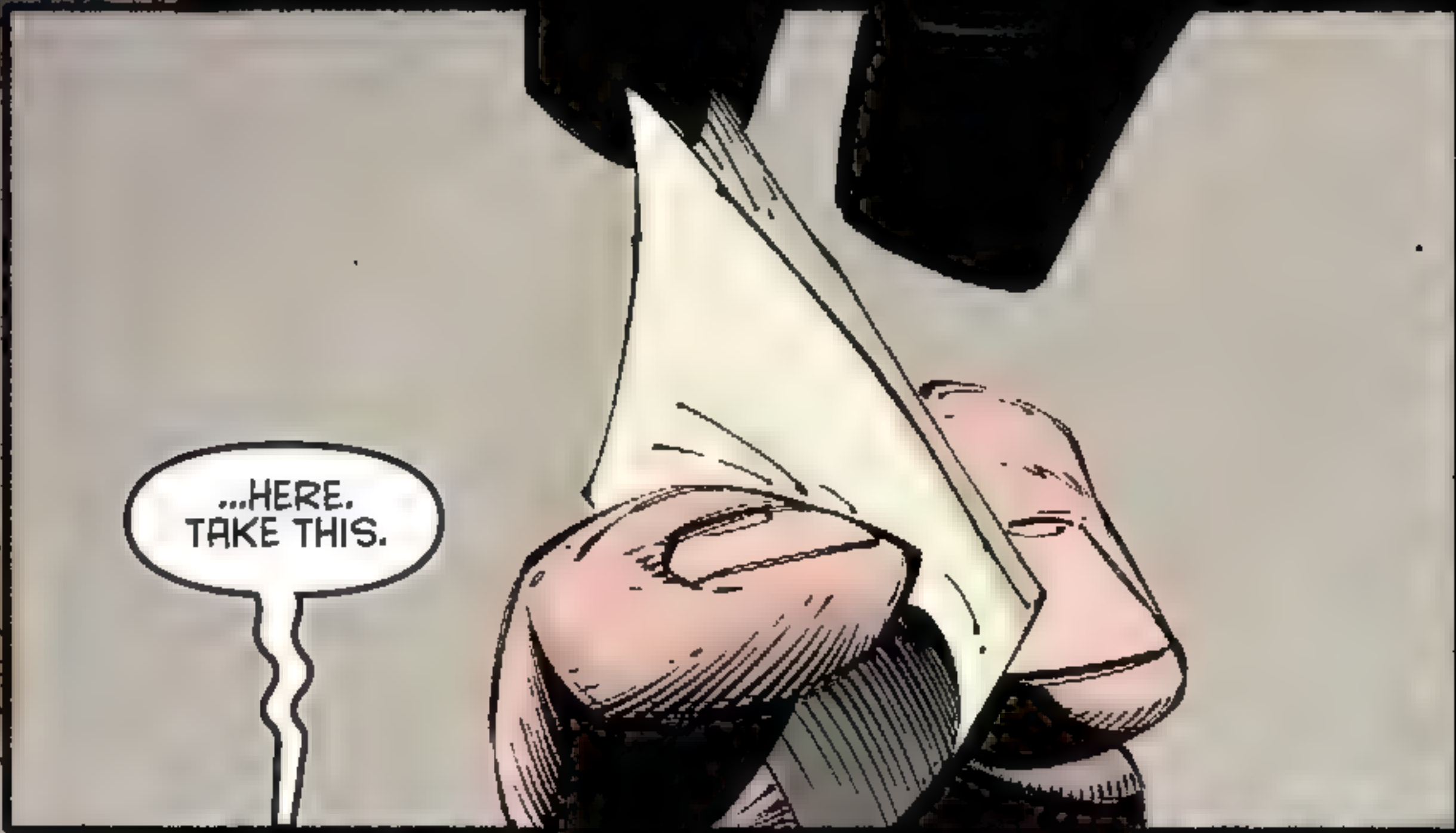
BLAM





DON'T TALK, MR. MARCH. AN AMBULANCE WILL BE HERE ANY MOMENT.

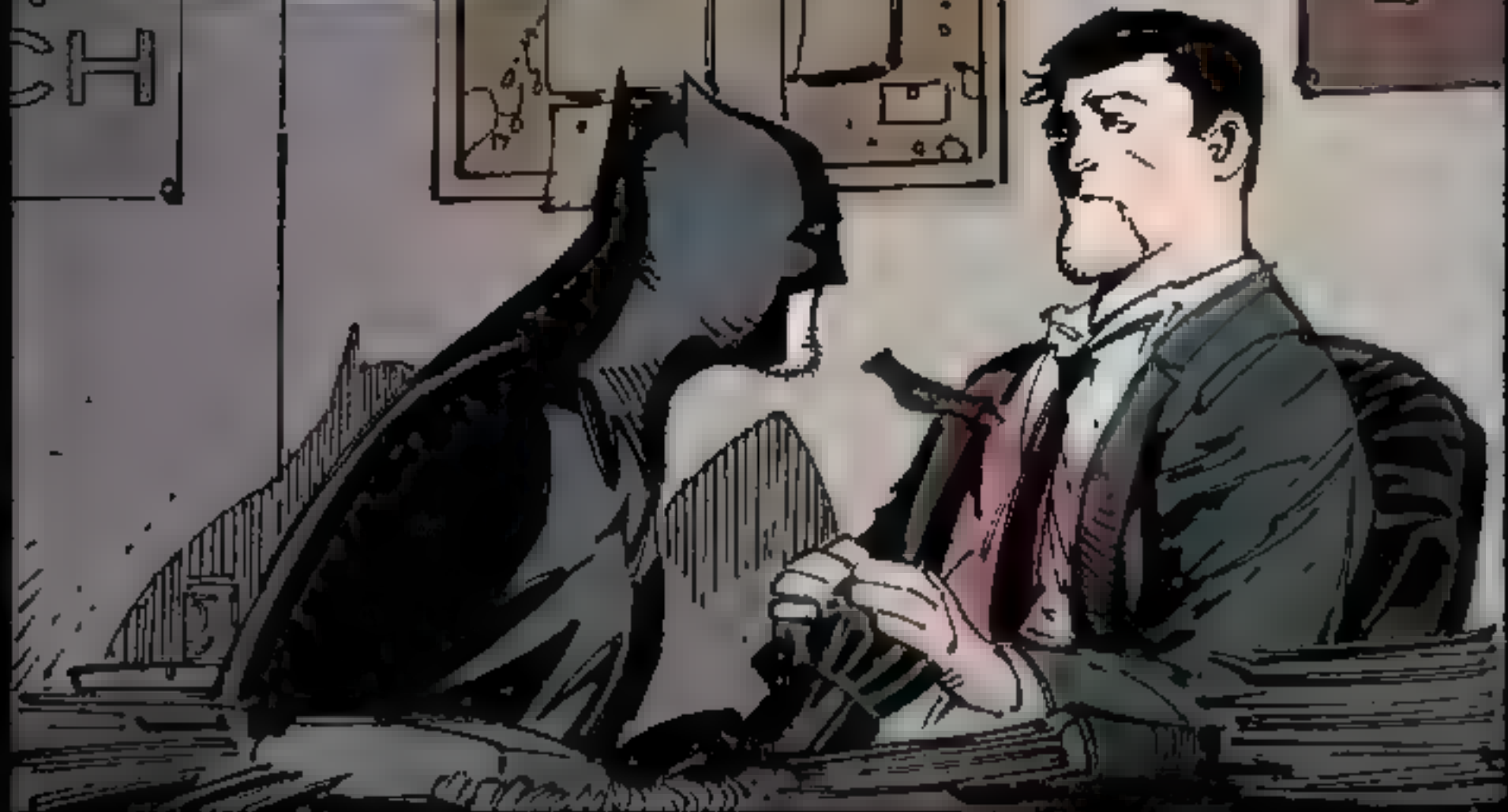
NO... PLEASE. HERE...



...HERE. TAKE THIS.

THERE ARE THREE NAMES ~~3~~KOFFE. I TRIED TO FOLLOW THE DONATIONS TO FIGURE IT OUT...IT'S AS CLOSE AS I GOT.

COULD BE ALL THREE OF THEM ARE IN THE COURT. COULD BE ~~3~~KOFFE NONE.



MR. MARCH, THE MORE YOU TALK--

I'M DEAD. HE KILLED ME. I GOT HIM BACK, THOUGH. ARMOR PIERCING, HEH. FRIEND ON THE FORCE...

BUT, BRUCE...



...BRUCE... YOU *KNOW HIM*. PLEASE, TELL HIM TO FIGHT THEM. THIS CITY, IT'S WORTH IT. IT CAN BE A GOOD PLACE.



REMIND HIM THAT...A BETTER GOTHAM IS JUST... ~~3~~KOFFE...IS ONE DREAM...



MASTER BRUCE. THE TALONS HAVE BEEN CONTAINED. I HAVE NEWS ON THE OTHER ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS, AS WELL.

I KNOW WHERE THEY LIVE, ALFRED.

BUT, SIR--

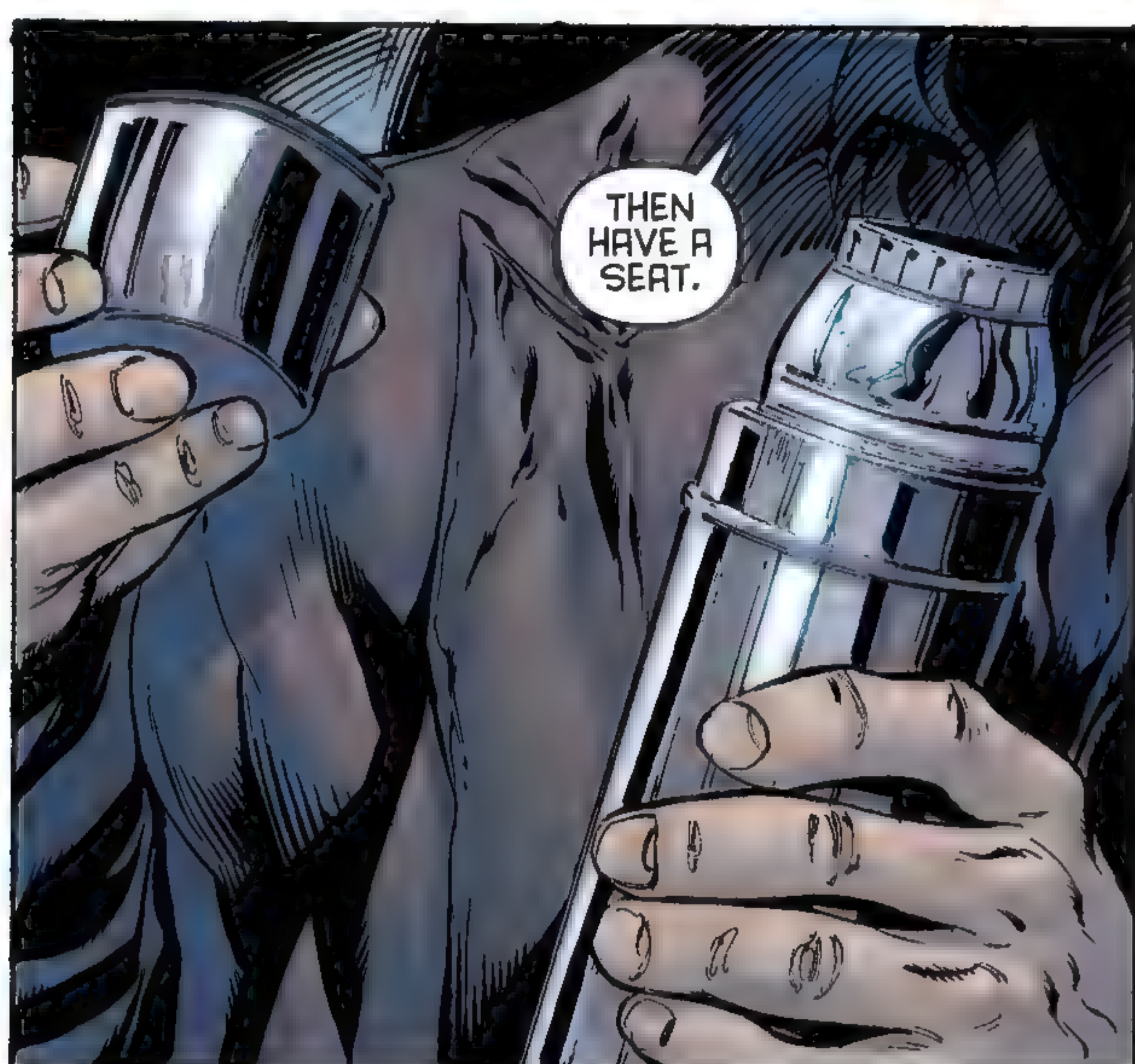
THEY CAME TO MY HOUSE...



...NOW I'M GOING TO BURN *THEIRS* TO THE GROUND.

G.O.T.H.A.M.







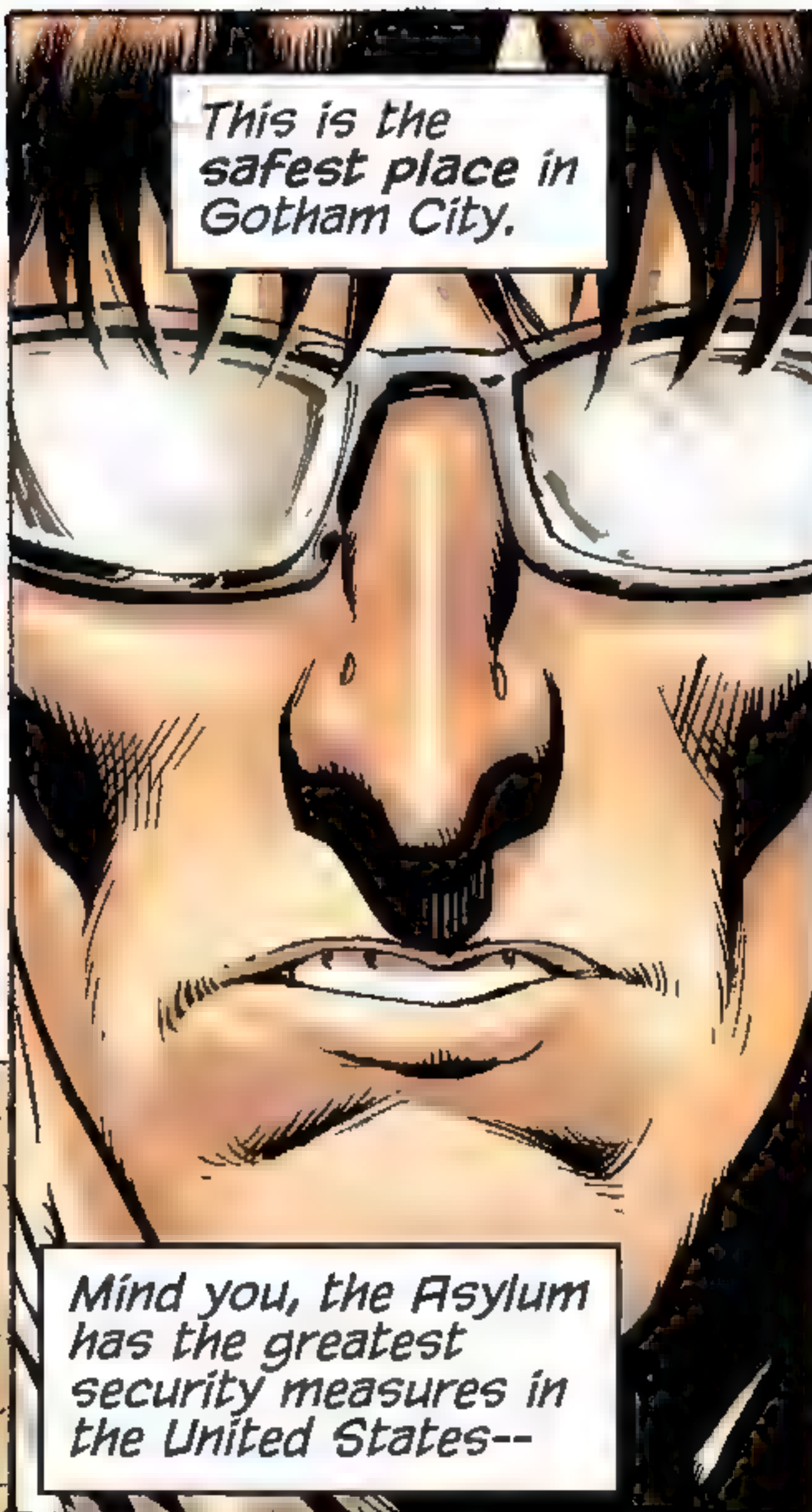
Batman in DETECTIVE COMICS NIGHT OF THE OWLS THE OWLS TAKE ARKHAM

I see no "clear and present danger" tonight.

Written and pencilled by
TONY S. DANIEL
Inks by **SANDU FLOREA**
colors by **TOMEU MOREY**
lettering by **JARED K. FLETCHER**

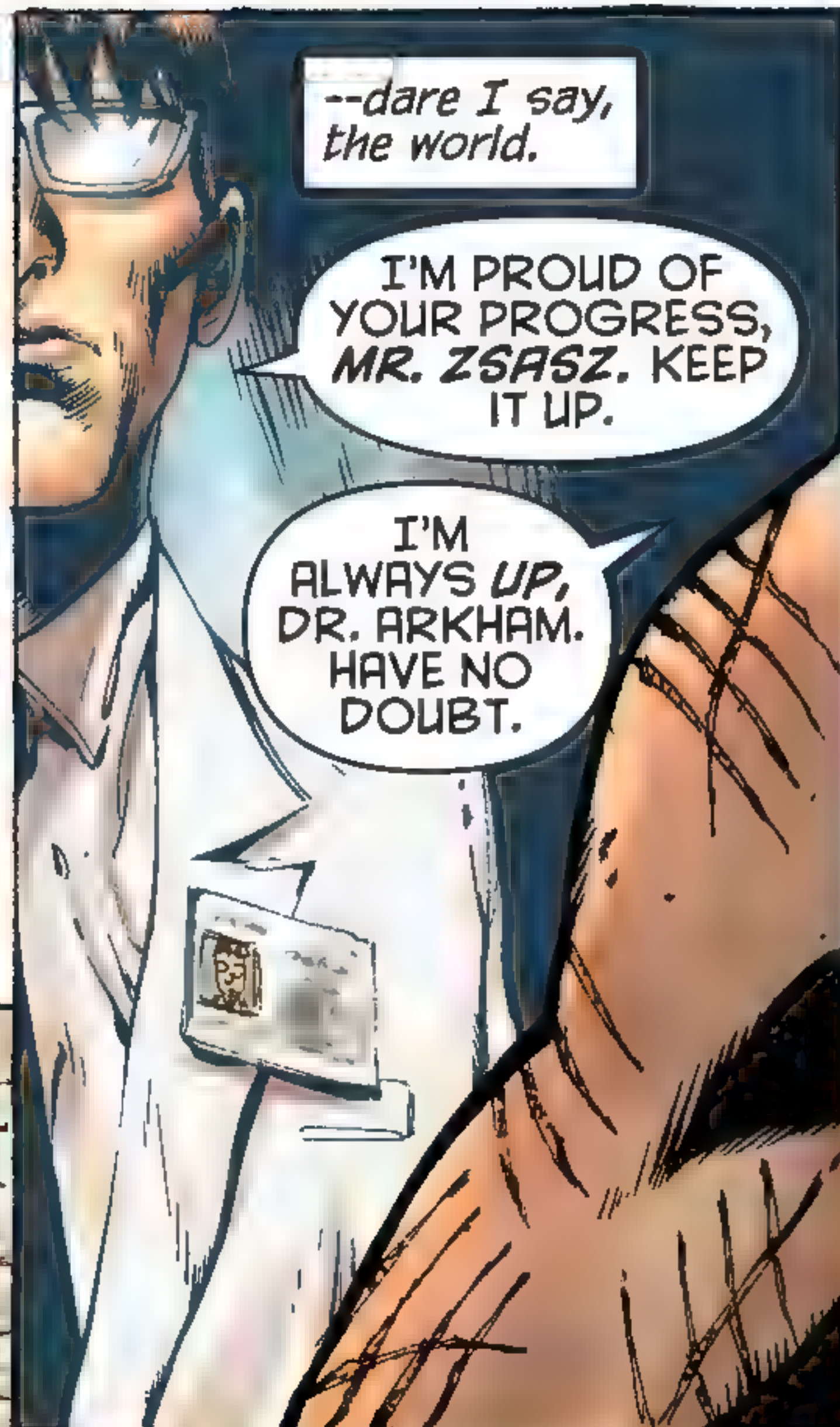


Surely, not more than any other night.



This is the safest place in Gotham City.

Mind you, the Asylum has the greatest security measures in the United States--



--dare I say, the world.

I'M PROUD OF YOUR PROGRESS, MR. ZSASZ. KEEP IT UP.

I'M ALWAYS UP, DR. ARKHAM. HAVE NO DOUBT.

For the patients here, my Asylum is a safe haven from the improper treatment dispensed inside the cells of Blackgate Prison--

--as well as a haven from themselves.

At Arkham, my guests can mend their minds at a natural pace (albeit with a little help from highly specialized treatment programs).

There is no better place on Earth for them.

Or me.



THE POLICE SUGGEST WE SECURE OURSELVES INSIDE THE SAFE ROOM UNTIL THEY HAVE ENOUGH MAN-POWER TO ESCORT YOU OUT.

NONSENSE, MR. CASH. THIS ENTIRE STRUCTURE IS OUR SAFE ROOM.

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, DOCTOR--YOUR NAME TURNED UP ON A HIT LIST.



ACCORDING TO THE G.C.P.D., ANY NUMBER OF HIGHLY TRAINED ASSASSINS ARE ON THEIR WAY TO THE ASYLUM RIGHT NOW. WE DON'T KNOW WHO THEY ARE OR WHY THEY'RE COMING, BUT...

...WE CANNOT TAKE ANY CHANCES.

OUR ISLAND IS ON LOCKDOWN. NO ONE CAN GET IN OR OUT.

LET GOTHAM SORT OUT ITS TROUBLES OUT THERE. IN HERE, WE ARE ALL SAFE...

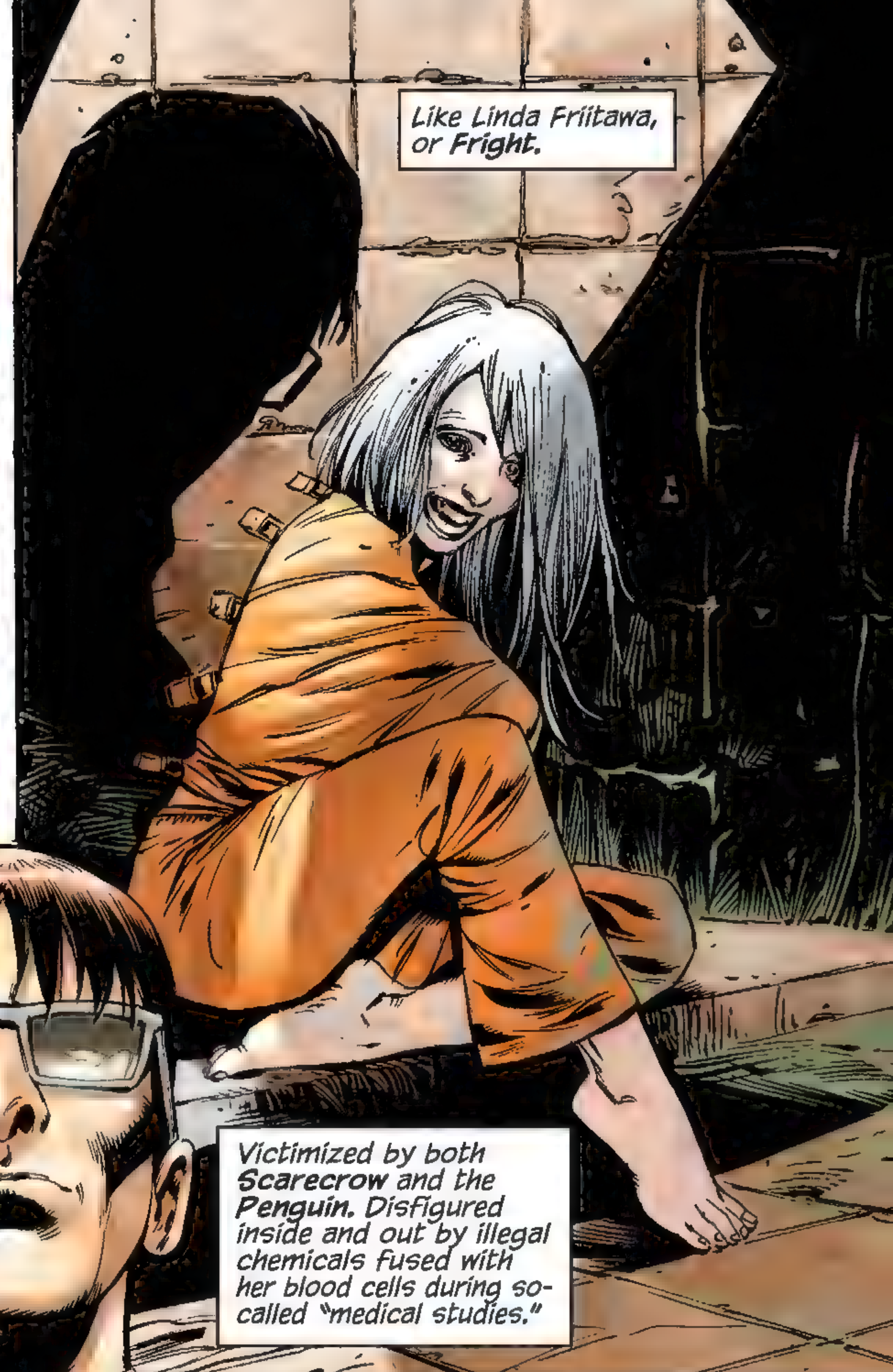
...PLUS, I HAVE WORK TO DO BEFORE LIGHTS OUT. MY PATIENTS ARE COUNTING ON ME.





Like Patient 372, A.K.A. Steeljacket.

Genetically manipulated, his bones are as hollow as his mind. He is a victim--as are the others I've come to know so well in recent months.




Like Linda Frightawa, or Fright.

Victimized by both Scarecrow and the Penguin. Disfigured inside and out by illegal chemicals fused with her blood cells during so-called "medical studies."




Then there's Basil Karlo, known infamously as Clayface.

Victimized and betrayed by his own lust for fame. A tragic set of events turned him into what he has now become...



Or take Nocturna, for example. Why, just the other day, she--

...an untouchable behemoth with an outer malleable membrane instead of flesh.



DR. ARKHAM, IT'S ROMAN SIONIS. HE'S READY TO END HIS HUNGER STRIKE--BUT HE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU FIRST.

Yes, being strapped down and force-fed intravenously will do that to a man.

Roman Sionis, A.K.A. the Black Mask. He's quite a...unique patient.

Thought dead just two years ago, he turned himself in, begging to be cured of his...affliction.

I welcomed him in and have been battling with the court system ever since.

He'll soon stand trial for his role in leading the gang known as the False Face Society, but only after I deem him fit to stand trial--

--a scenario that seems farther away with each passing day.

DOCTOR, I'VE COME TO MY GOOD SENSES, YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO HEAR.

I WANT TO LIVE. I WANT TO BE WELL!

THAT'S A WONDERFUL FIRST STEP, ROMAN.

BUT I CAN'T DO IT ALONE. I NEED HELP FROM MY--

NOW, NOW. LET'S NOT START--

DOCTOR, YOU'VE AVOIDED ME EVER SINCE...

...WELL, SINCE YOU TOOK MY PARTNER AWAY...FOR THAT JOYRIDE.

I CAN ASSURE YOU, THE RIDE WAS ANYTHING BUT JOYFUL, ROMAN.

IN FACT, IT TAUGHT ME HOW DANGEROUS AND DESTRUCTIVE YOUR PARTNER CAN BE.

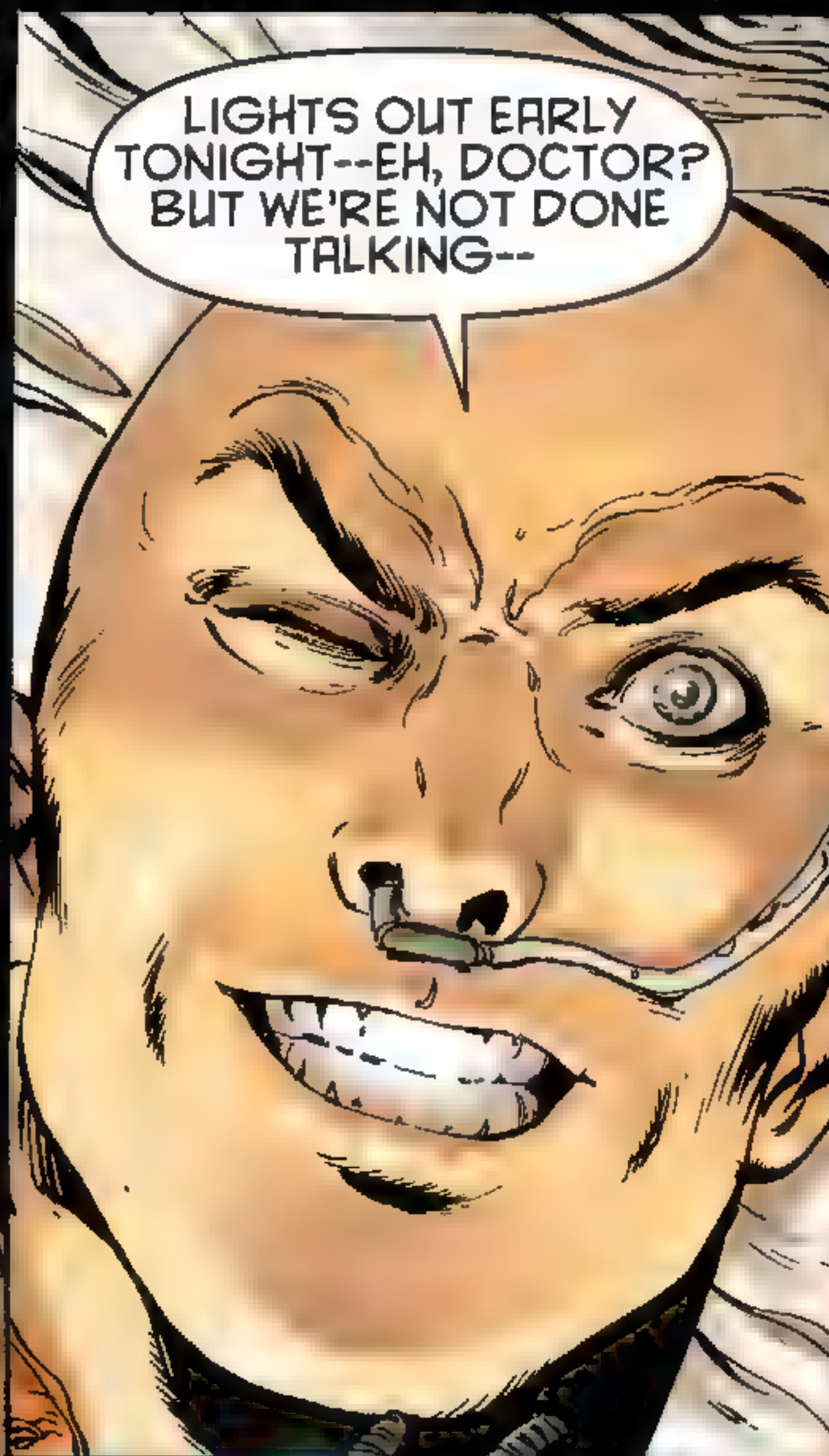




YOU TWO MUST *NEVER* BE REUNITED. YOUR PARTNER NOT ONLY CONTROLS YOU, BUT ANYONE YOU--

THOOM

WHAT?



LIGHTS OUT EARLY TONIGHT--EH, DOCTOR? BUT WE'RE NOT DONE TALKING--



A STORM MUST BE APPROACHING. THE BACKUP GENERATOR WILL KICK IN S--

The flicker in his eyes--designates movement.



Behind me!

ZHHZCH

GUHRN!



JEREMIAH ARKHAM, FOR HARBORING AND ENCOURAGING CRIMINALS, THE COURT OF OWLS HAS SENTENCED YOU...

...TO DIE.

THERE IS NO USE DELAYING THE INEVITABLE.



OUR WORK CAN BE SWIFT, JEREMIAH.

OR NEEDLESSLY PROLONGED. THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

BAM

BOOM

RUN!

RUN
LIKE HELL,
ARKHAM!

BOOM

MY FREEZE
GRENADES WILL
SLOW THE *TALONS*
DOWN. I CAN ONLY
HOLD THEM BACK
FOR SO LONG!

MOVE IT,
DOCTOR!

BOOM

Batman! I should have
guessed... he must have led
these fiends to my sanctuary!

BOOM

Got to get away.
Mustn't get swept up.

I KNOW
THE ASYLUM
HAS SEVERAL
HIDDEN POINTS
OF ESCAPE,
DOCTOR.

CHOOSE
ONE AND
GET THERE!

CRUNCH

NOW!

BAM

CHACK

UGHN!

BATMAN,
YOU CANNOT
STOP THE COURT
OF OWLS FROM
REACHING ITS
TARGET...

...FROM
KILLING
ARKHAM!

Anyone deranged enough to invade my Asylum is welcome to stay and be analyzed by my staff.

Batman, particularly.

Who knows? Perhaps I could... fix him.

WHAT *HIDDEN ESCAPES* DOES HE MEAN, DOCTOR?

JUST GIBBERISH, MR. CASH.

DOCTOR ARKHAM, YOU HAVE JUST EARNED A SLOW DEATH.

GO!

I'm fleeing inside my own sanctuary. My home.

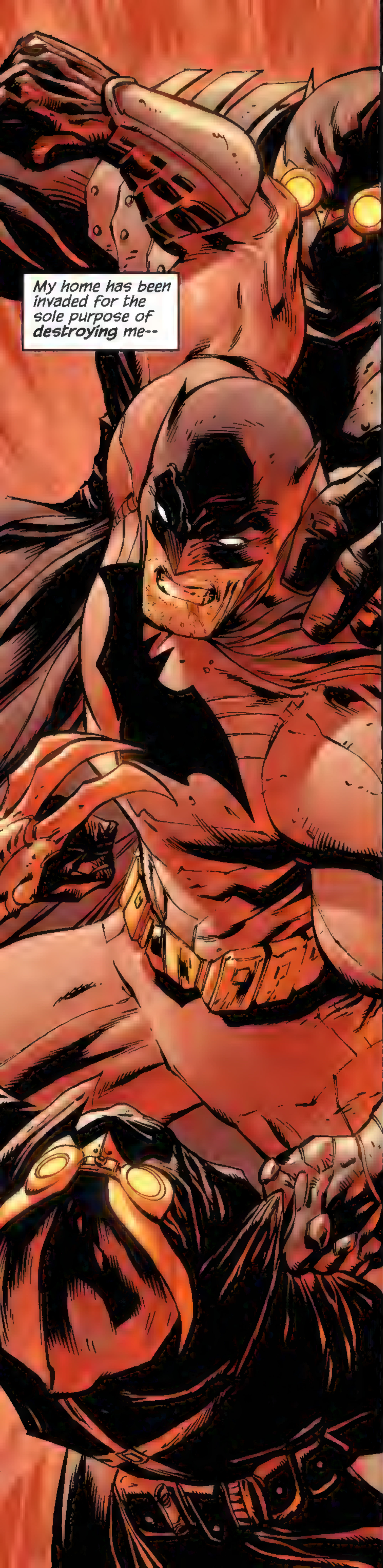
B-DEEP DEEP

I must fix this at any cost!

CLAMP

ARGH!

Roman Sionis. Yes. He's my only hope.



My home has been invaded for the sole purpose of destroying me--



--destroying everything that I and my ancestors have made here.

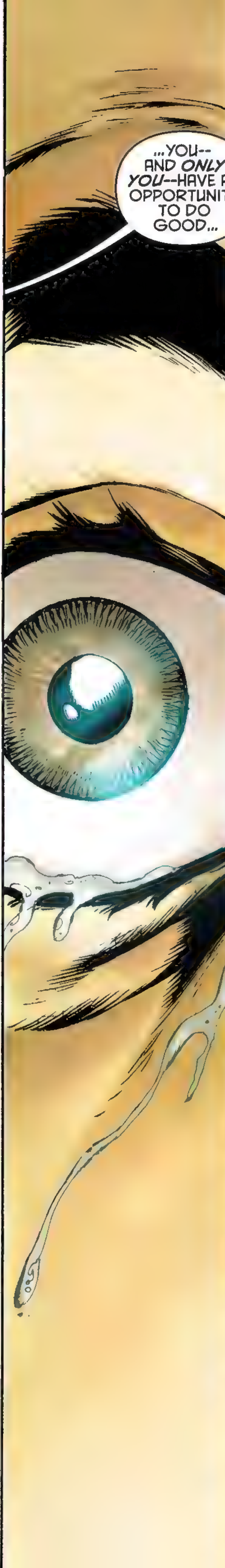
Brilliant men like Amadeus Arkham.

TONIGHT, YOUR SAFE HAVEN HAS UNINVITED GUESTS.

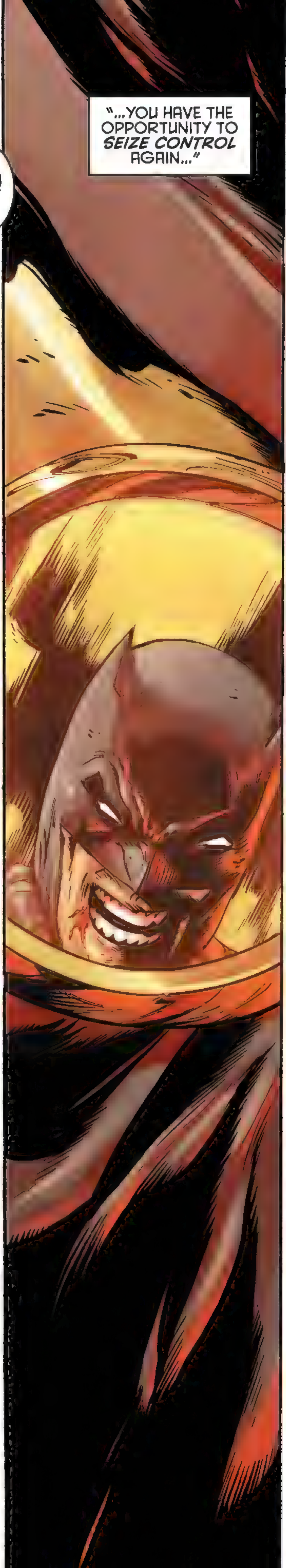
ONES WHO, IF NOT STOPPED, WILL DESTROY **EVERYTHING** YOU'VE COME TO RELY ON FOR YOUR SAFETY, ROMAN SIONIS...



"...I WILL HAVE TO **TRUST** THE EVIL I **KNOW** MORE THAN THE EVIL I **DON'T**..."



...YOU-- AND **ONLY YOU**--HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO GOOD...



"...YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO **SEIZE CONTROL** AGAIN..."



"...DO THIS FOR ME, AND I WILL HELP YOU ATTAIN **EVERY LEVEL** OF COMFORT I CAN AFFORD TO YOU, HERE.

I... I WILL OBEY YOU.



"I WILL OBEY YOU, MASTER!"



He's crushing my throat.
Can't get out from this
Talón's grasp!

YOUR VOCAL
CORDS WILL BE
RUPTURED. HOW
HORRIBLE.

~GRGHH!~



I WANT
TO HEAR YOU
BEG FOR
YOUR LIFE.

CRACK



WHAT IS
THIS? A
TRICK?

VMBH=MMMMMMMMMM

The cell behind
me...opening!



BRASHH

I CAN'T HELP
MYSELF, PUNKS! I HAVE
AN INCREDIBLE URGE TO
COMPLETELY RIP YOU
TWO APART!

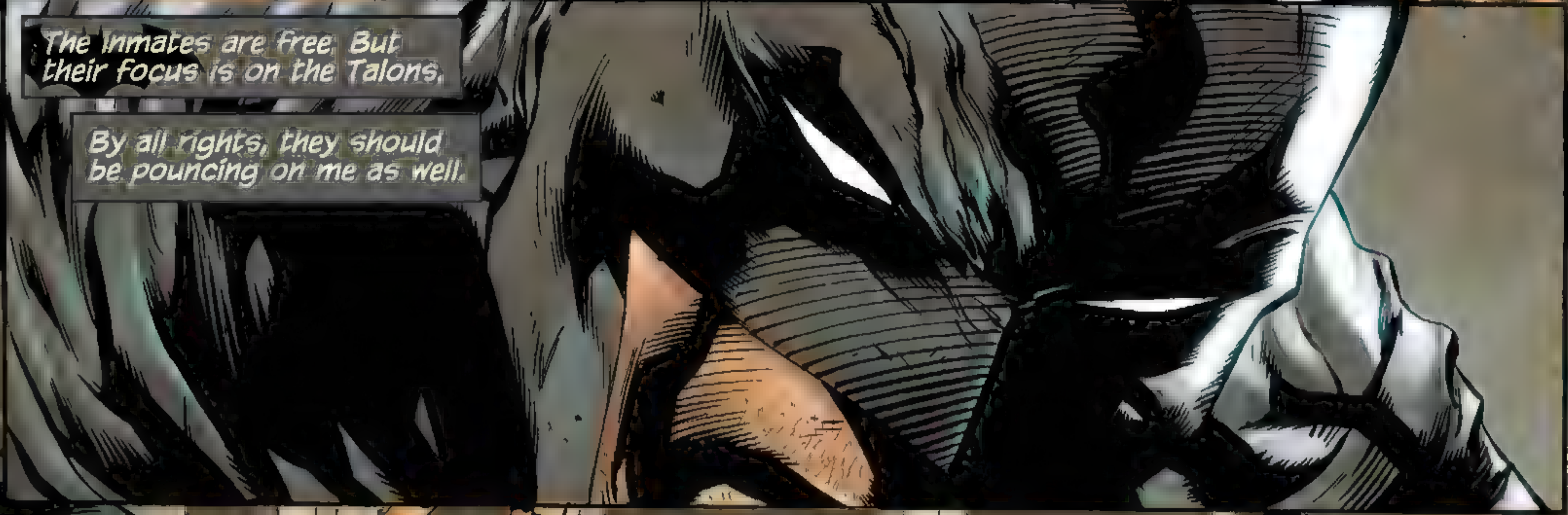
Clayface?



AND BY THE LOOKS OF IT, I'D SAY I'M NOT ALONE IN THAT THOUGHT.

WE ARE SURROUNDED.

THEY'RE STILL NO MATCH FOR US.



The inmates are free. But their focus is on the Talons.

By all rights, they should be pouncing on me as well.



But they're not.



Arkham Asylum is highly compartmentalized. One chamber seals into another.

B-DEEP DEEP



They can fight it out in the cell block until Gordon can afford the manpower to regain control.

WELL DONE,
DARK KNIGHT.

WE CAN NOW
SORT OUT *OUR*
BUSINESS--
UNDISTURBED FROM
THAT CHAOS OUT
THERE.

*BLACK
MASK?* IS
THAT YOU,
ROMAN?

ROMAN
SIONIS IS
MY MASK,
BATMAN.

WHAT ARE
YOU...DOING TO
MY HEAD?

JUST
SUGGESTING
YOUR NEXT
COURSE OF
ACTION,
BATMAN.

DR. ARKHAM
TOLD ME TO STOP
THE INTRUDERS.
AND *YOU* ARE AN
INTRUDER.

GAAAAAAAH!

YOUR
POWERS PREY
ON THE *WEAK
MINDED*.

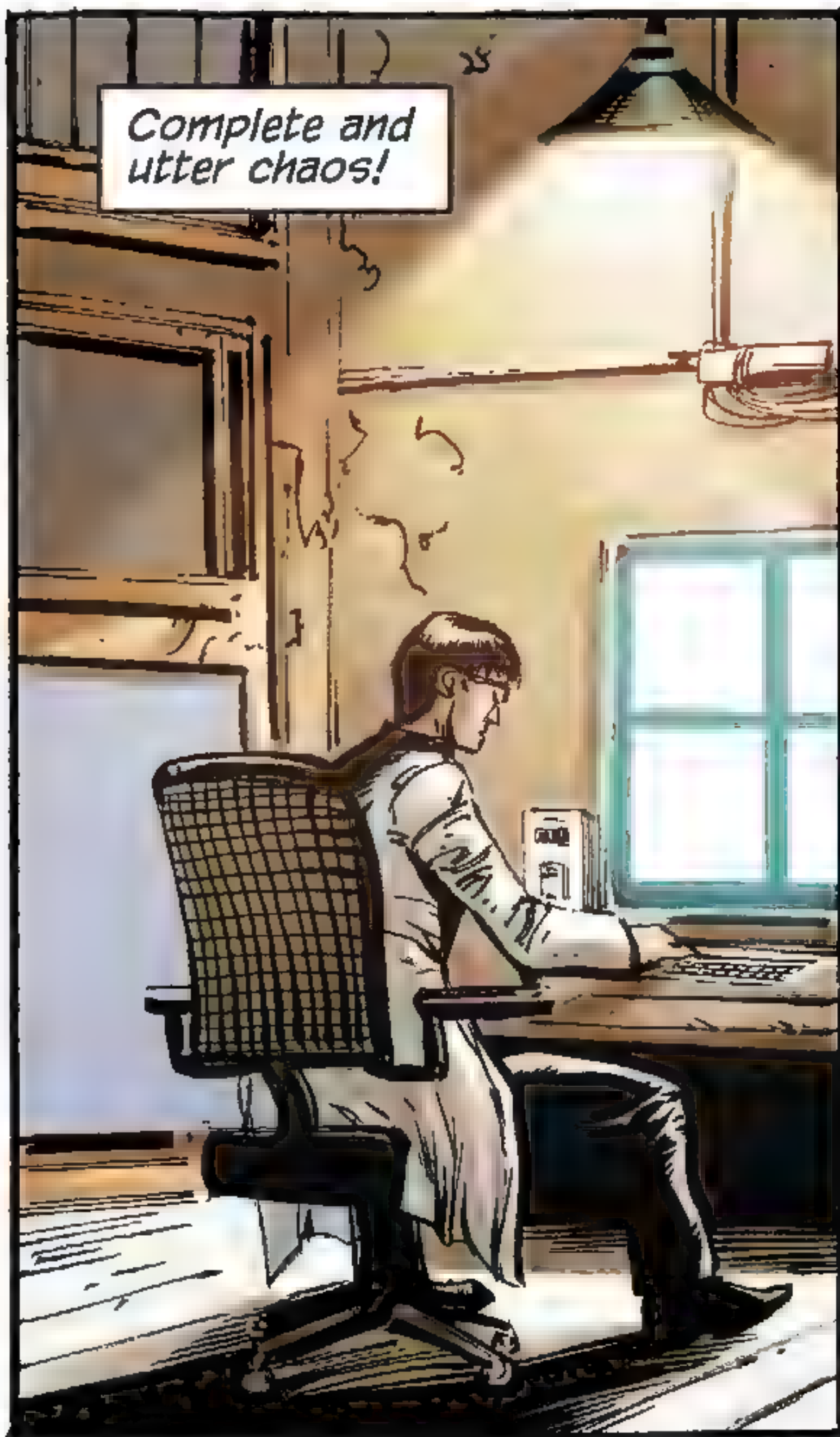
CHUK

BLAME
HIM FOR
TH--

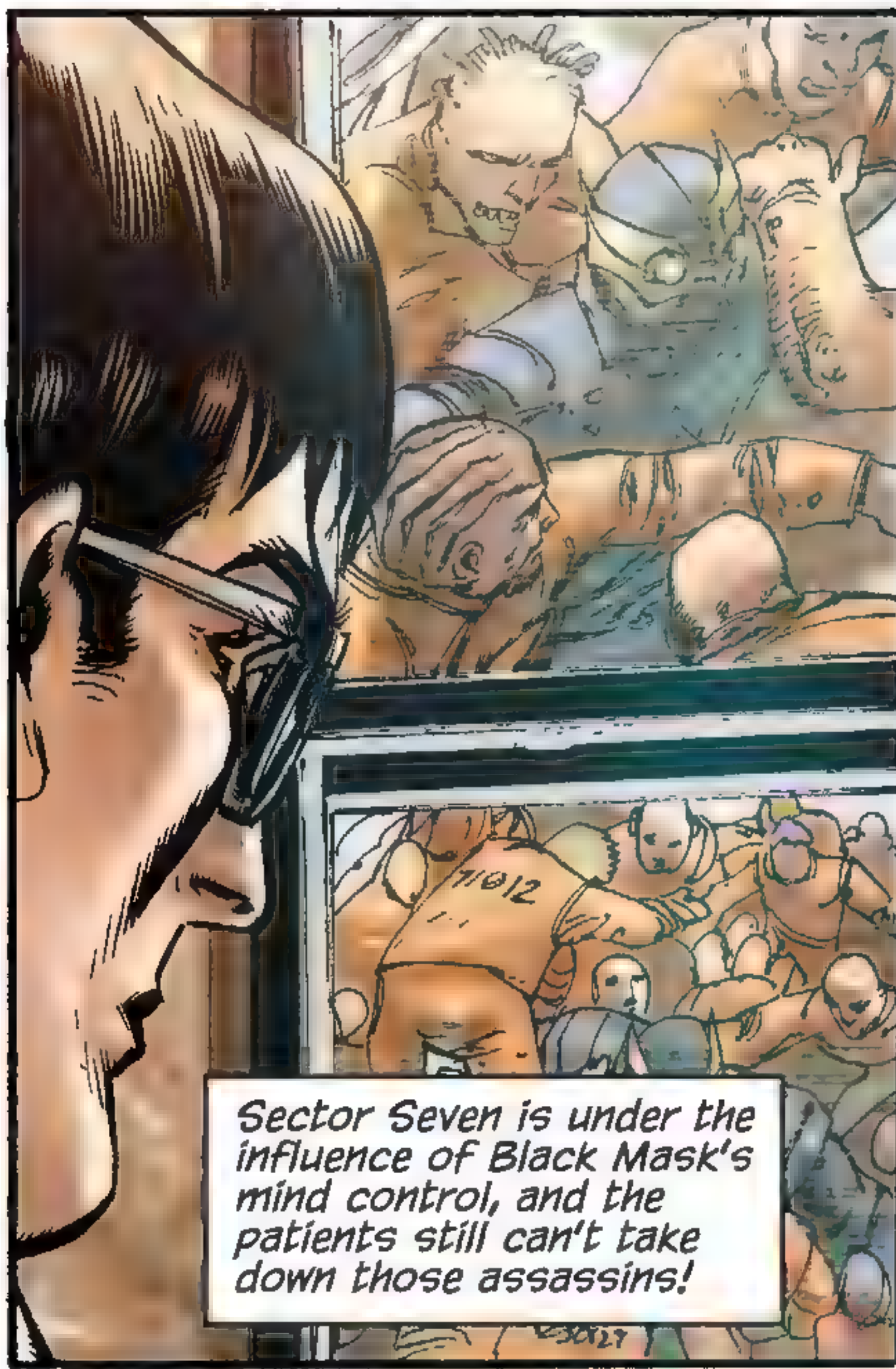
DO
I LOOK
WEAK TO
YOU?

N-NO!

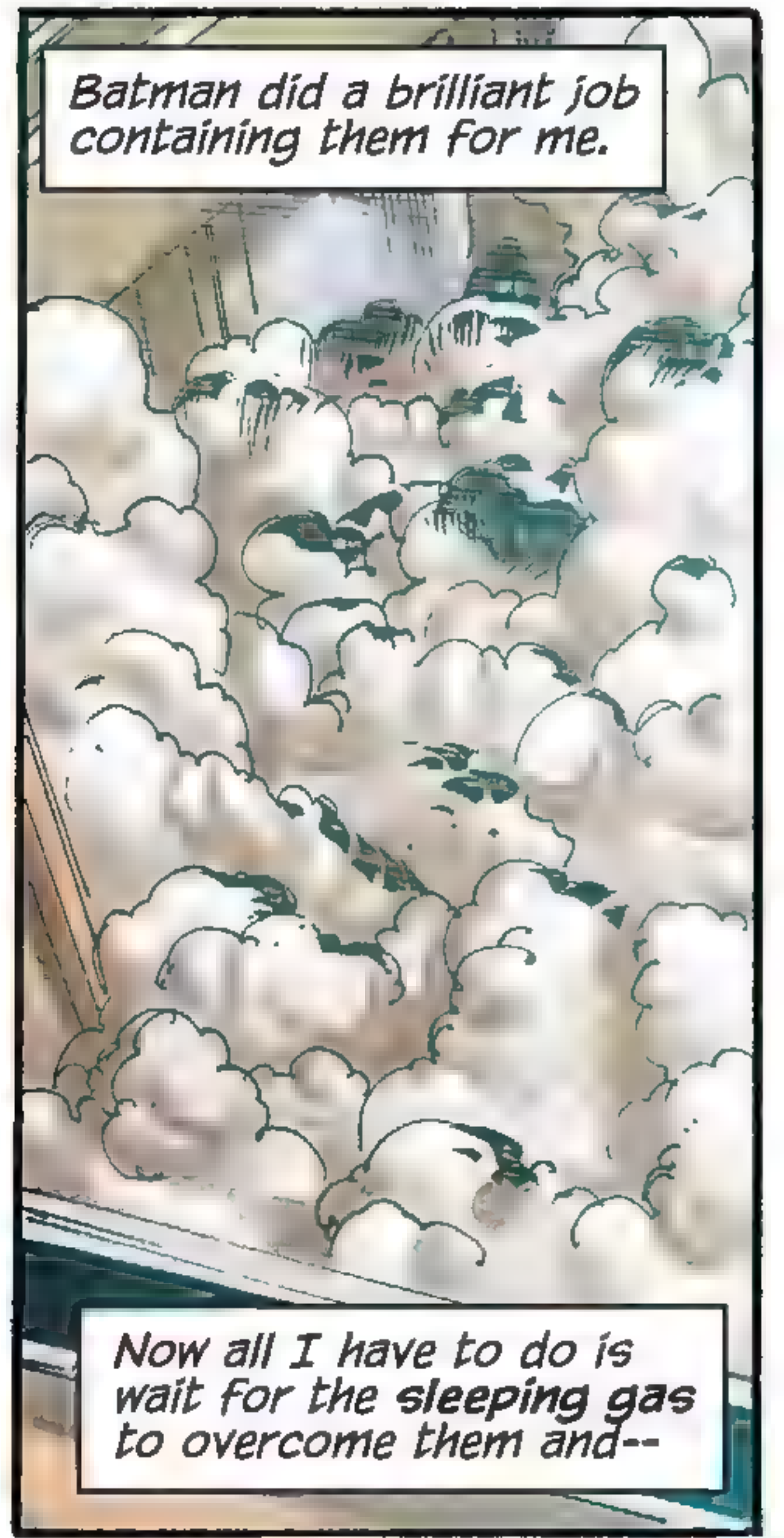
ARKHAM.
WHERE IS
HE?



Complete and utter chaos!

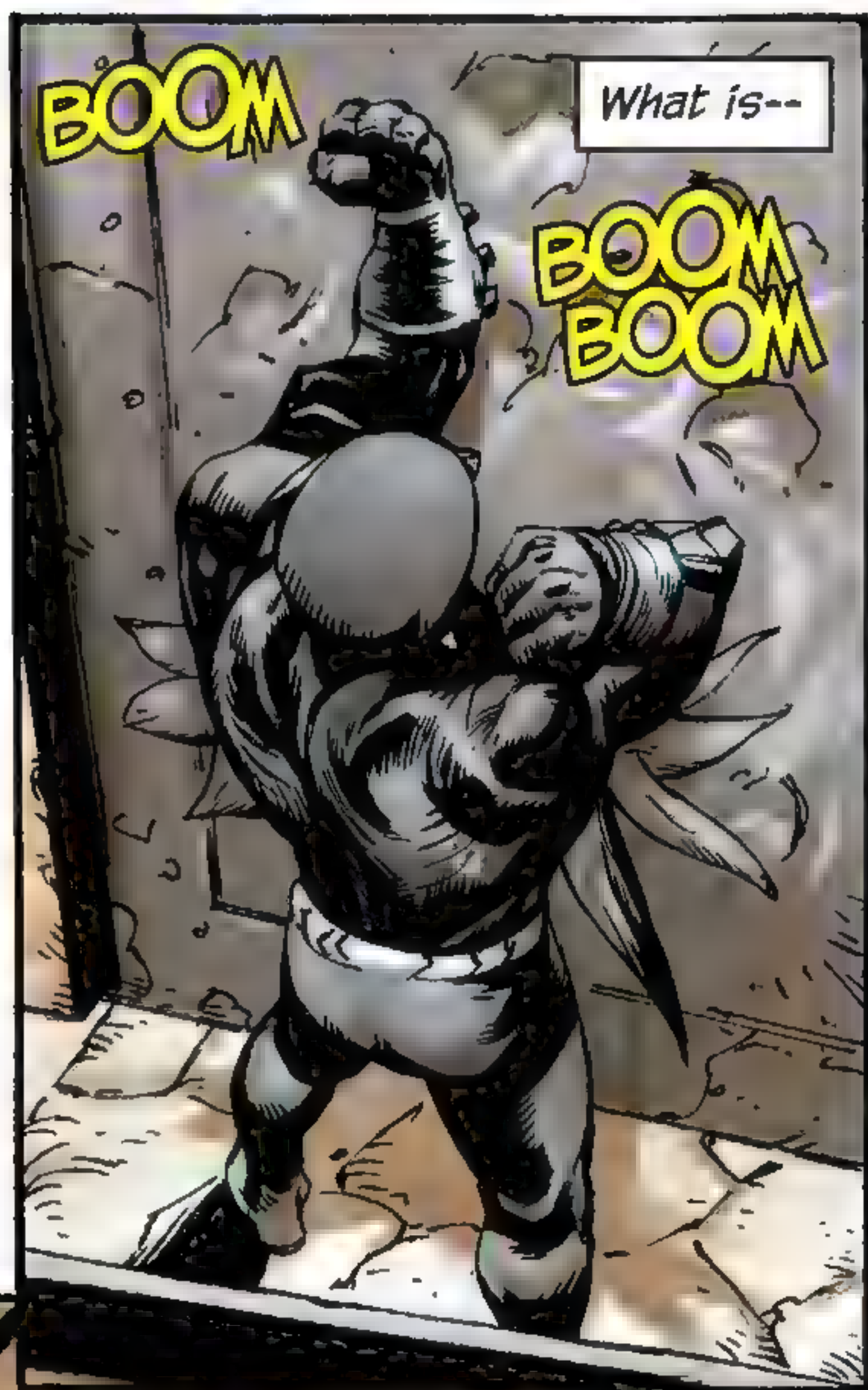


Sector Seven is under the influence of Black Mask's mind control, and the patients still can't take down those assassins!



Batman did a brilliant job containing them for me.

Now all I have to do is wait for the sleeping gas to overcome them and--



BOOM

BOOM
BOOM

What is--

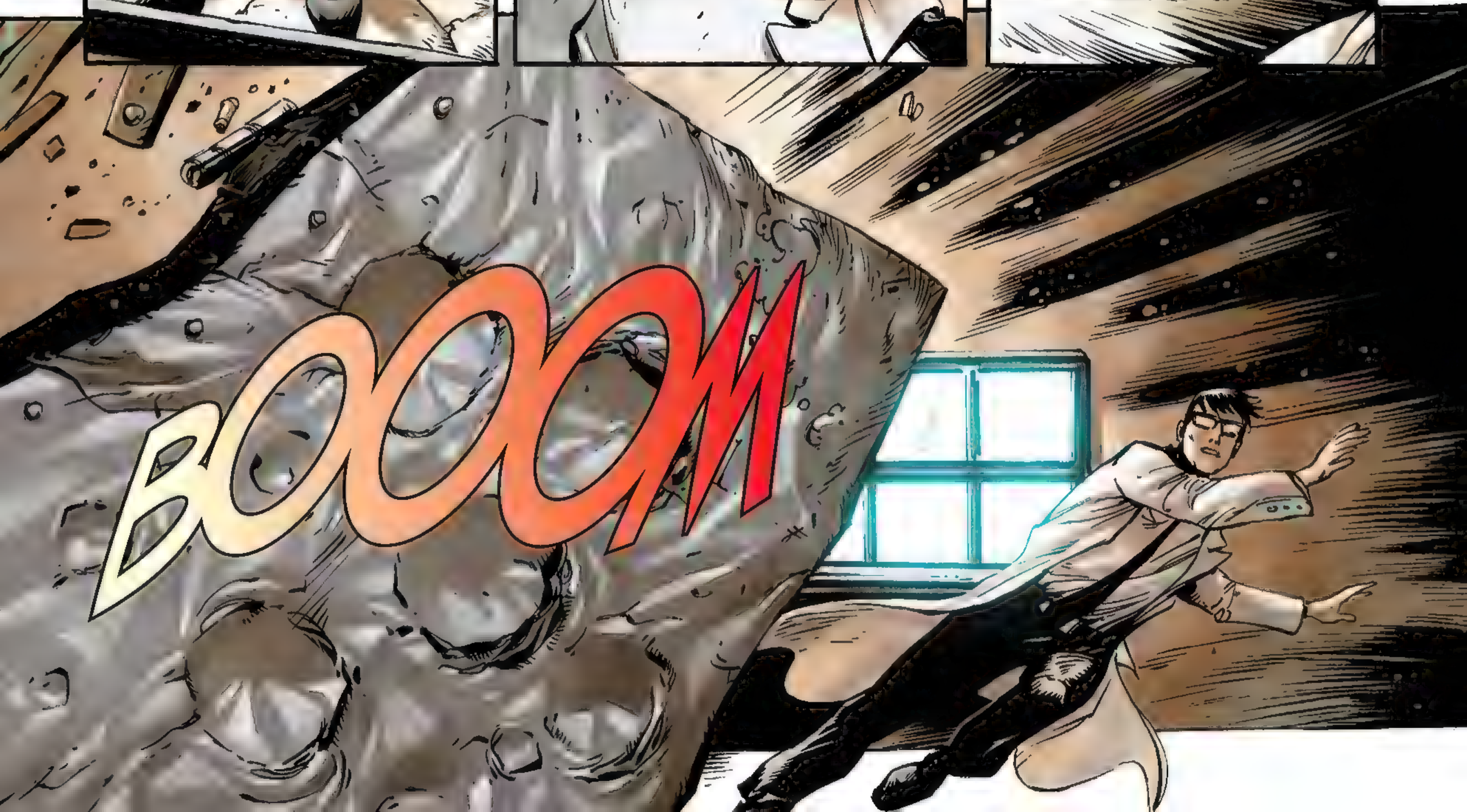


BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

Right outside my door! One of them has followed me somehow!



BOOM
BOOM
BOOM



BOOM



BATMAN?
Y-YOU?!

CRASH



ROMAN SIONIS HAS
BEEN PUT BACK IN
HIS CAGE. NO NEED
TO THANK ME,
ARKHAM.

SIONIS
WAS FREE?
HOW--



SHUT IT. YOU'RE
COMING WITH
ME.

YOU'RE
INSANE! YOU
CAN'T--



BAP



RELAX,
DOCTOR. IT'LL
BE A SHORT
RIDE.

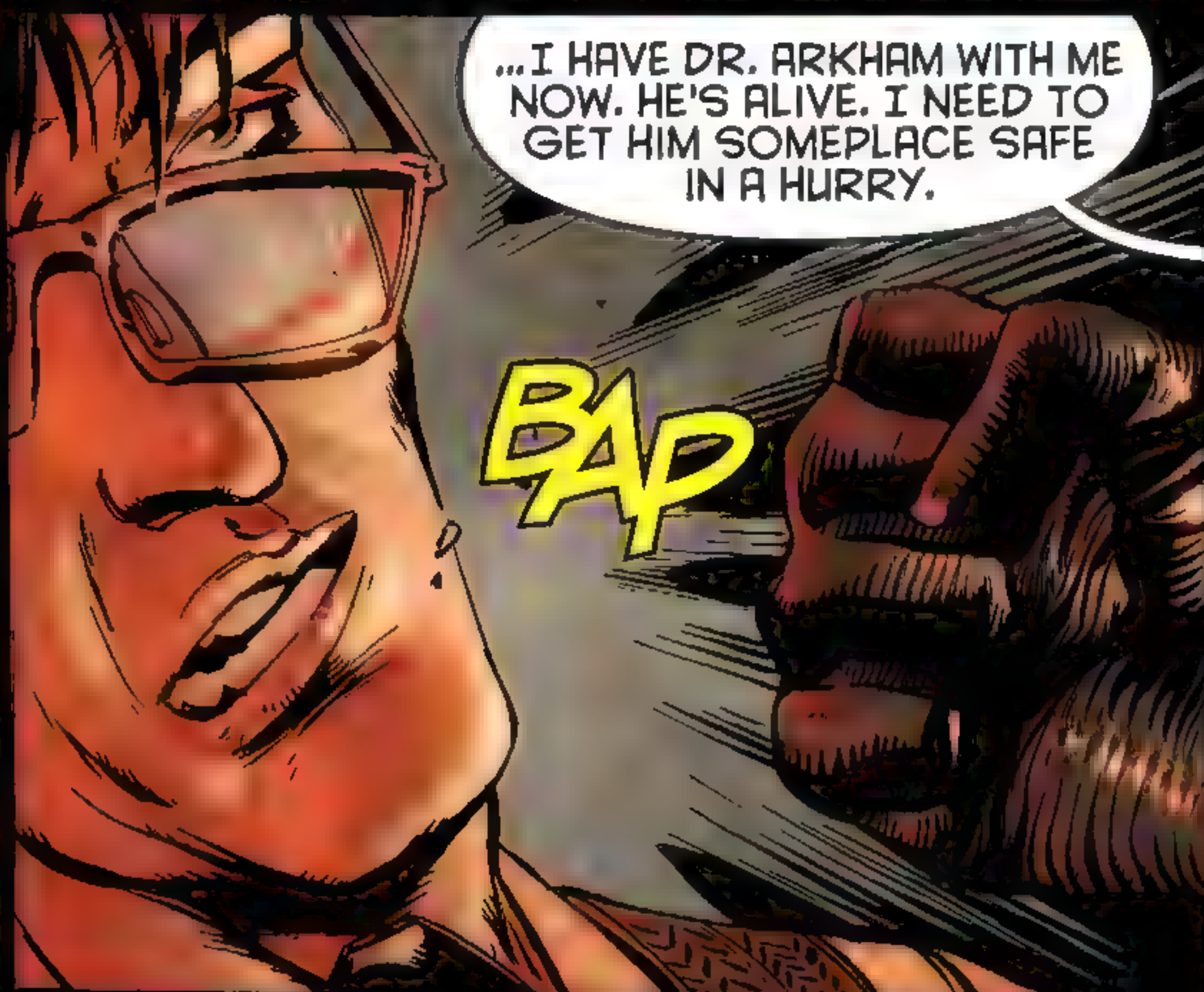


GRN...
WH-WHAT'S...
GOING...

BATMAN, I'VE
BEEN TRYING TO REACH
YOU--EVERYTHING OKAY?
WILLIAM COBB
AND I--

THERE'S NOT
ENOUGH TIME IN
THIS ONE NIGHT,
NIGHTWING...

BEEE-
DEEET

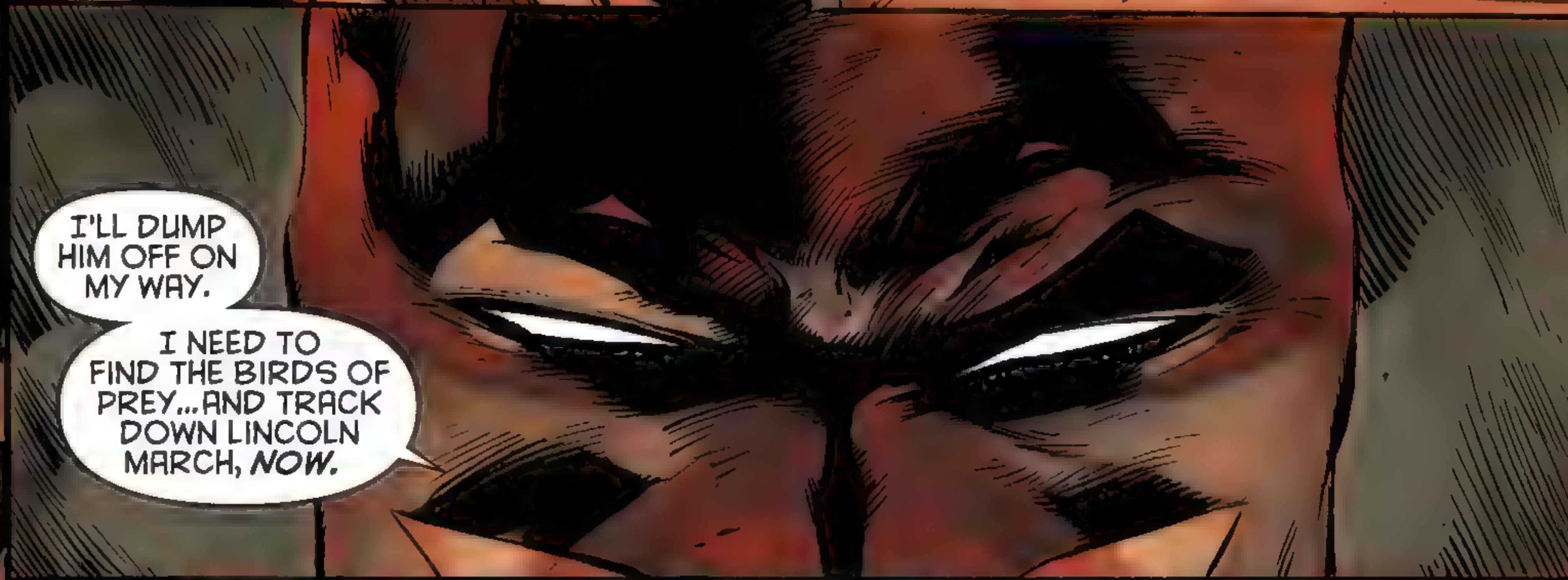


...I HAVE DR. ARKHAM WITH ME
NOW. HE'S ALIVE. I NEED TO
GET HIM SOMEPLACE SAFE
IN A HURRY.

BAP



EVERYONE'S ANSWERING
YOUR CALL, BUT I CAN
TAKE ARKHAM OFF YOUR
HANDS. JUST TELL
ME WHERE TO
MEET YOU.



I'LL DUMP
HIM OFF ON
MY WAY.

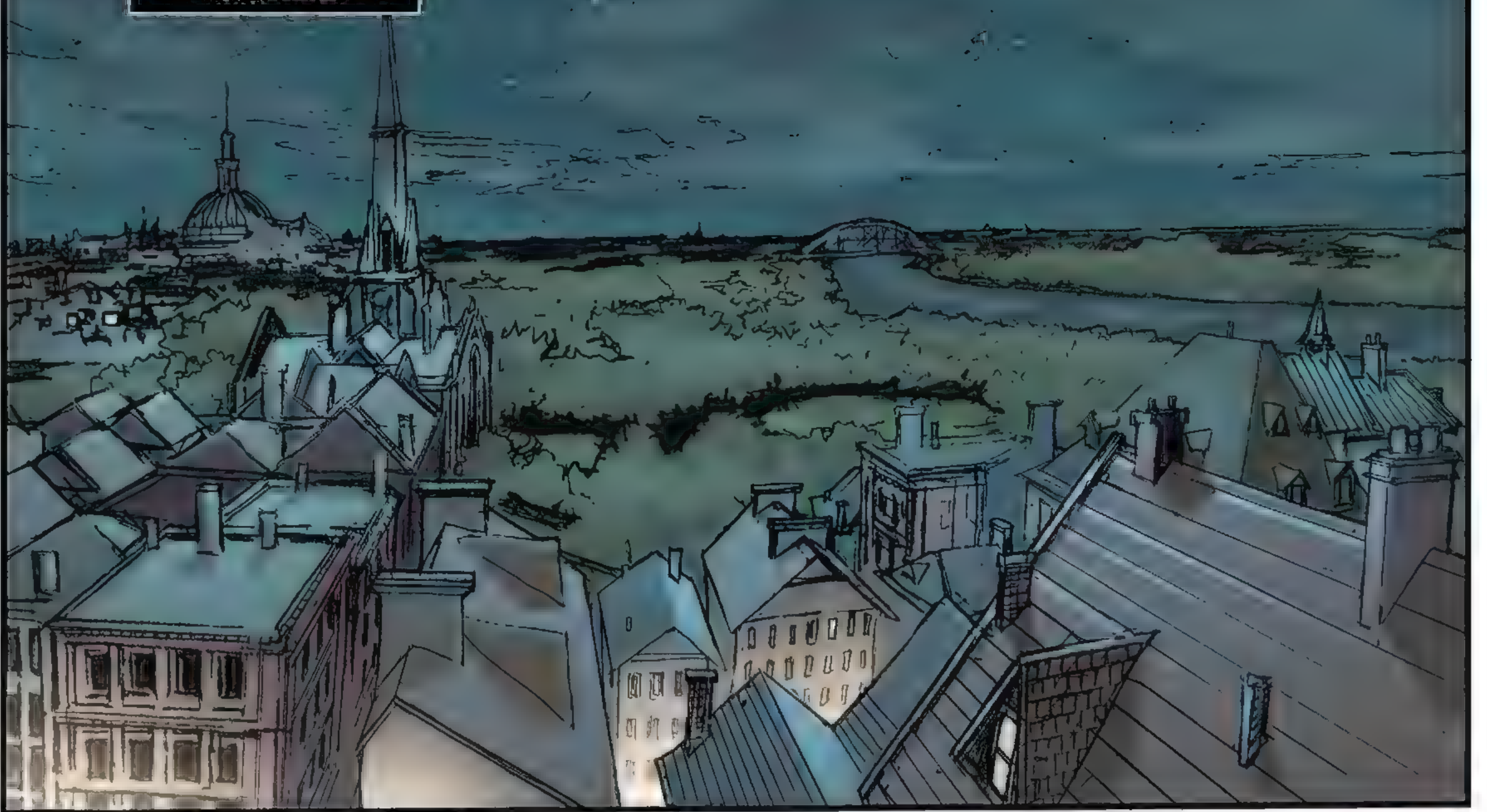
I NEED TO
FIND THE BIRDS OF
PREY...AND TRACK
DOWN LINCOLN
MARCH, NOW.

*This long night has
gotten longer...*





THE CITY OF GOTHAM
IN THE YEAR OF OUR
LORD 1842.



THE STREETS ARE RULED BY
CRUEL MEN WITH LITTLE MORE
THAN SHARP KNIVES AND A
LACK OF REMORSE.

THEY BAND TOGETHER IN
GANGS TO ROB AND RAPE AND
FILL THE GUTTERS WITH BLOOD.



BUT THERE IS ANOTHER BAND
MORE POWERFUL THAN
GANGS IN GOTHAM...



...AND THAT IS
THE COURT.

Black Canary, a martial artist with a sonic scream that can shatter your skull. Batgirl, Gotham's brilliant vigilante. Katana, a mysterious samurai who wields a soul-stealing mystical sword. Poison Ivy, a slightly crazed eco-terrorist who controls plant life. Starling, a master spy who knows a thousand ways to make you bleed. Together they've sworn to fight those who think they're above the law. Together they are...

BIRDS
OF PREY

NIGHT OF THE OWLS GANGLAND STYLE

WRITER DUANE SWIERCZYNSKI PENCILLER TRAVEL FOREMAN
INKER JEFF HUET COLORIST GABE ELTAEB LETTERS DAVE SHARPE

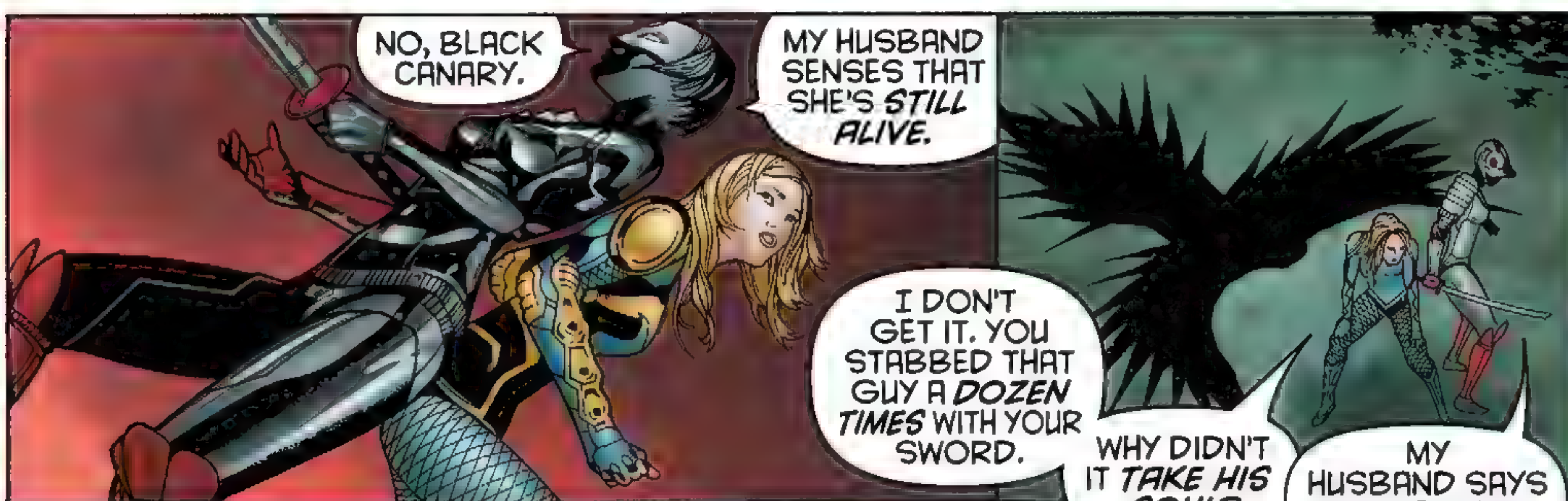


GOTHAM, NOW.

NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 8:20 PM...



YOU
THINK IVY'S
DEAD,
KATANA?



NO, BLACK
CANARY.

MY HUSBAND
SENSES THAT
SHE'S STILL
ALIVE.

I DON'T
GET IT. YOU
STABBED THAT
GUY A DOZEN
TIMES WITH YOUR
SWORD.

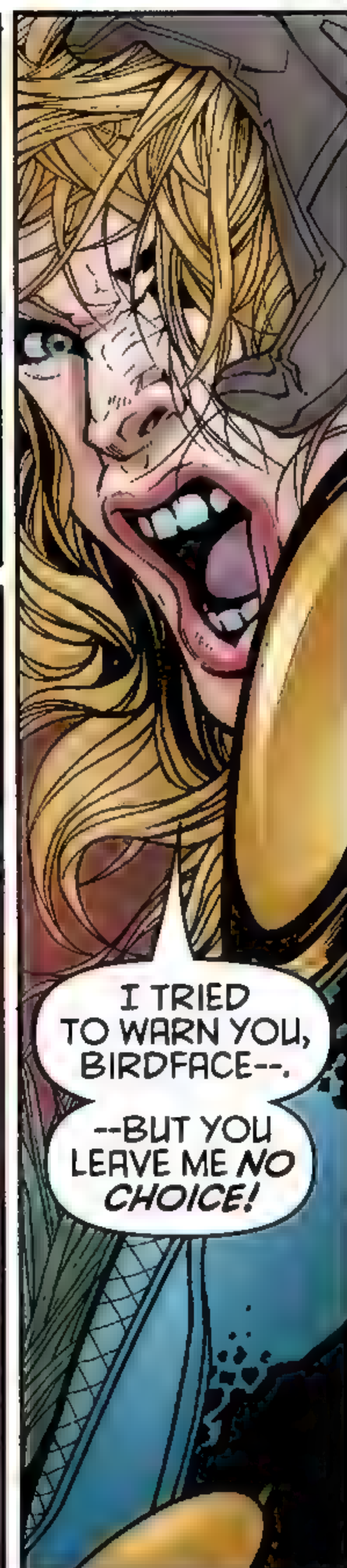
WHY DIDN'T
IT TAKE HIS
SOUL?

MY
HUSBAND SAYS
IT DOES NOT
HAVE ONE.



I TRIED
TO WARN YOU,
BIRDFACE--.

--BUT YOU
LEAVE ME NO
CHOICE!

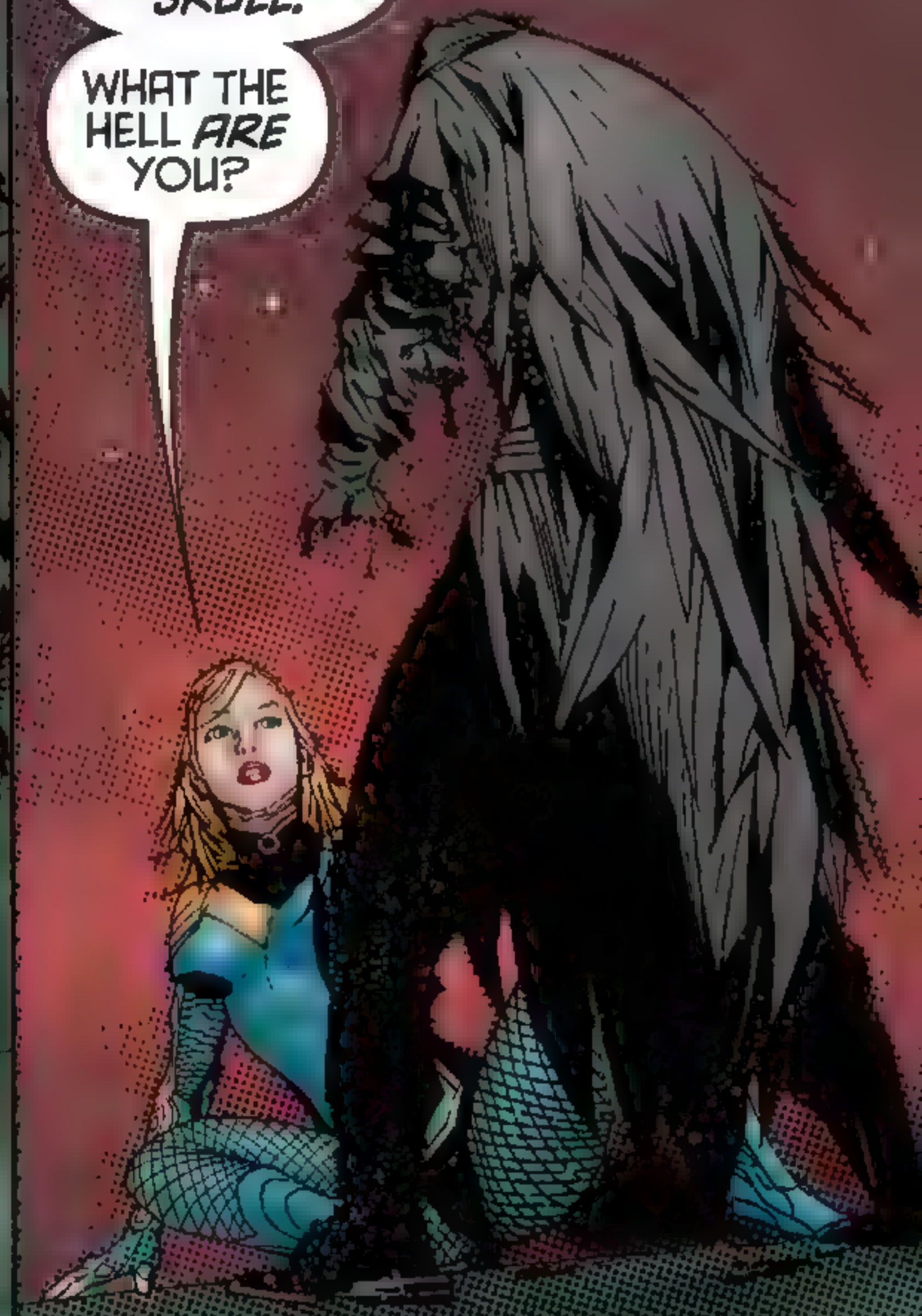





SKREEEEEE



NO.
NO WAY.
THAT SHOULD HAVE SHATTERED YOUR SKULL.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU?






I WAS BORN HENRY
BALLARD, AND I SERVE THE
COURT OF OWLS.

MY EXPERIENCES IN
THIS CITY HAVE TAUGHT
ME ONE TRUE THING--
NOTHING CHANGES.

GOTHAM'S STREETS
ARE THE SAME.

THE BLOOD FLOWS IN THE
GUTTERS JUST THE SAME.

THE CRIMES, THE WICKED ACTS,
THE ATROCITIES... ALL THE SAME.



THE VERMIN, TOO,
ARE UNCHANGED, EVEN
THOUGH THEY DRESS
IN A PECULIAR FASHION.

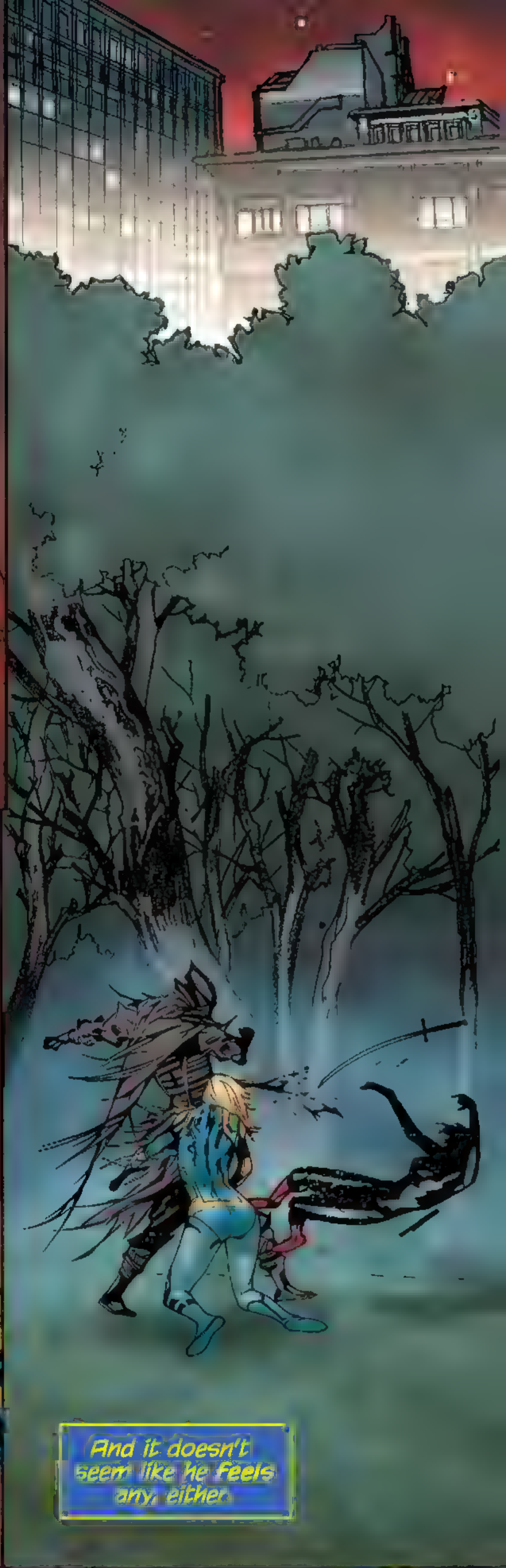


If this thing has a name, he isn't sharing it.



He doesn't speak. He doesn't respond to questions.

All he does is inflict pain.



And it doesn't seem like he feels any, either.



I had been sparring with Tatsu when Batgirl called my cell.

Seems agents of something called the Court of Owls, like from the nursery rhyme, were terrorizing Gotham, and it was all hands on deck time.

The mythical Batman himself was asking for help, and who were the Birds of Prey to refuse?



But this mysterious assassin seemed to know everything about us, because he found Poison Ivy first.

KRAVINKEL

And tracked us down not long after.

No matter what kind of grievous injury we throw at him...and believe me, we've thrown a lot of grievous injuries his way...

The creepy bastard doesn't even flinch.



WE MUST FALL BACK, CANARY!



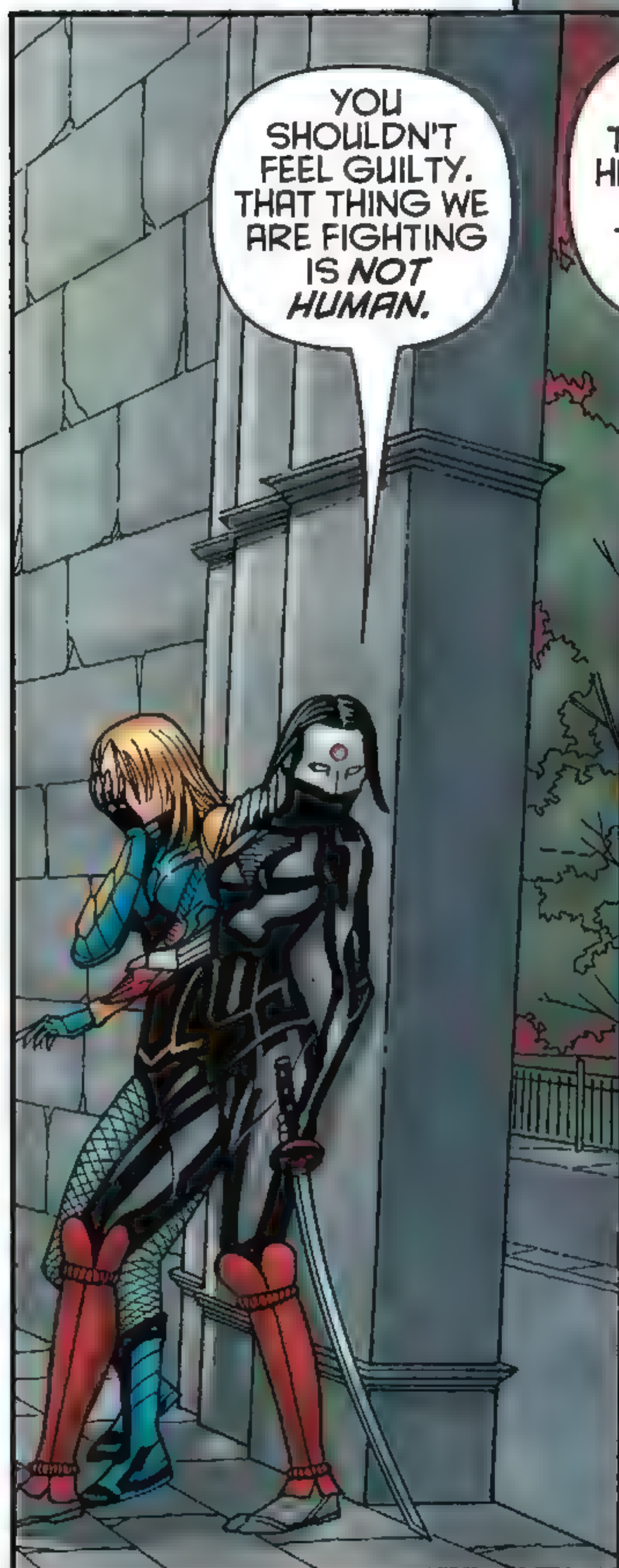
THE
CHURCH OF ST.
FRANCIS/ LET'S
LEAD IT INTO
THERE!

YOU THINK
SOME SORT
OF BLESSING
WILL STOP
IT?

NO. I'VE
FOUGHT HERE
BEFORE. I KNOW
THE TACTICAL
ANGLES.

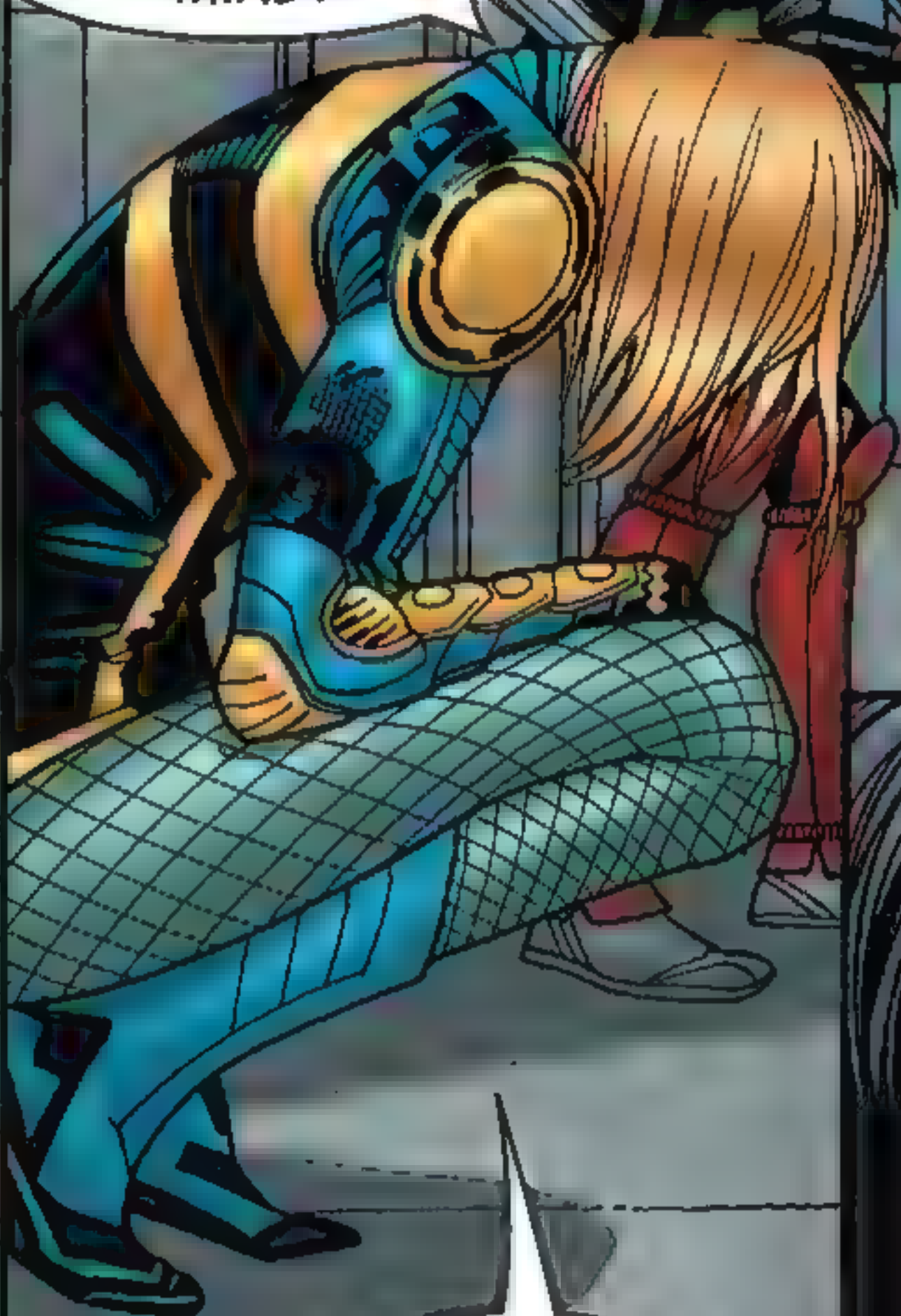


I SAW YOU
HOLDING *BACK*, CANARY.
ALMOST AS IF YOU WERE
APOLOGIZING.

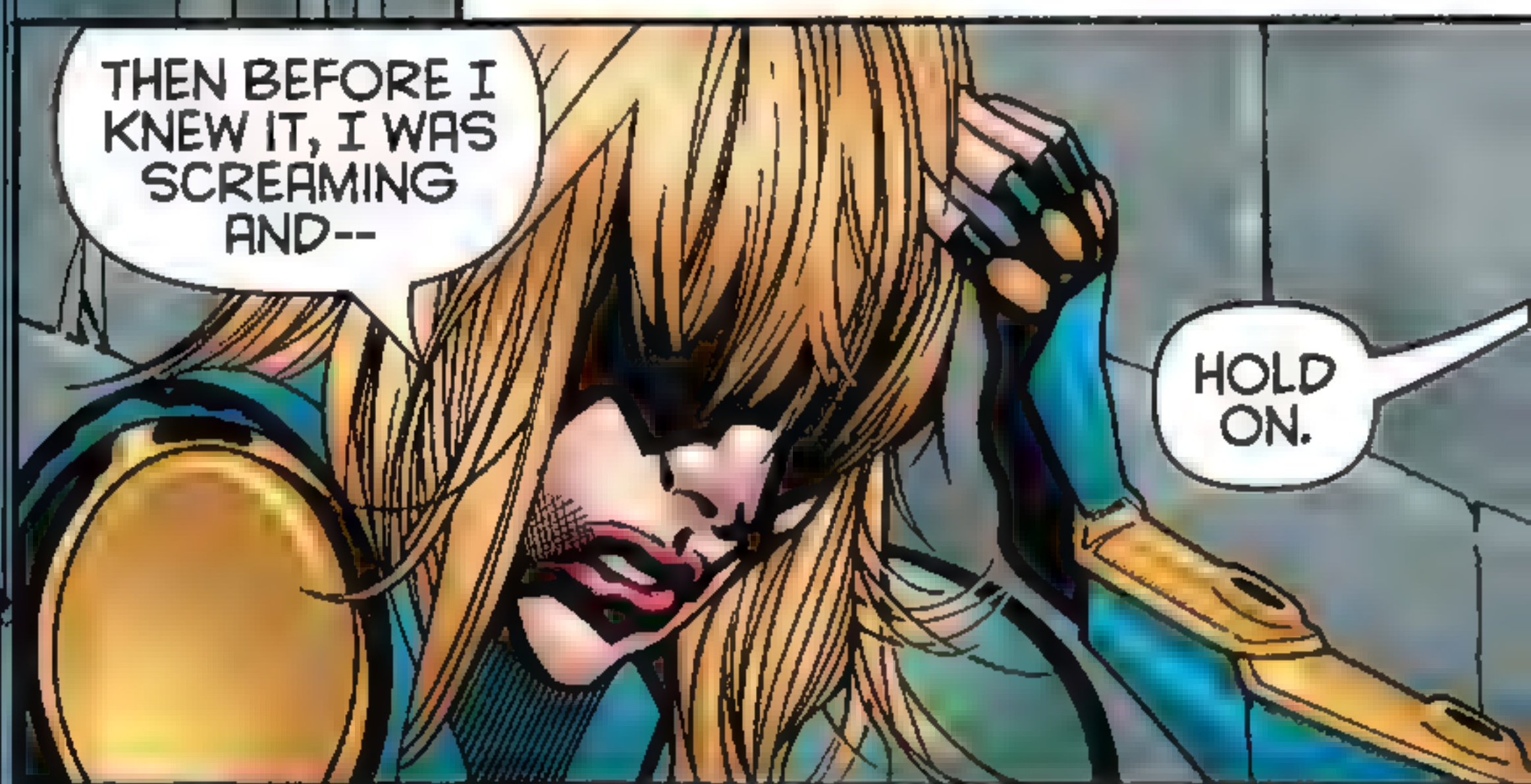


YOU
SHOULDN'T
FEEL GUILTY.
THAT THING WE
ARE FIGHTING
IS *NOT*
HUMAN.

NO...I KNOW.
IT'S JUST THAT
THIS STUFF WITH MY
HUSBAND'S MURDER
HAS OPENED UP
THIS *UGLY LITTLE*
DOOR IN MY
MIND.



I KEEP
THINKING,
OBSESSED,
RELIVING
THAT
NIGHT.



THEN BEFORE I
KNEW IT, I WAS
SCREAMING
AND--

HOLD
ON.



HERE IT
COMES.



WAIT A
SECOND...
...I
KNOW THAT
SOUND.

SO MANY EVILDOERS SEEK REFUGE
IN HOUSES OF WORSHIP, AS IF
BEGGING FOR A LAST-MINUTE
INDULGENCE FROM THE LO--

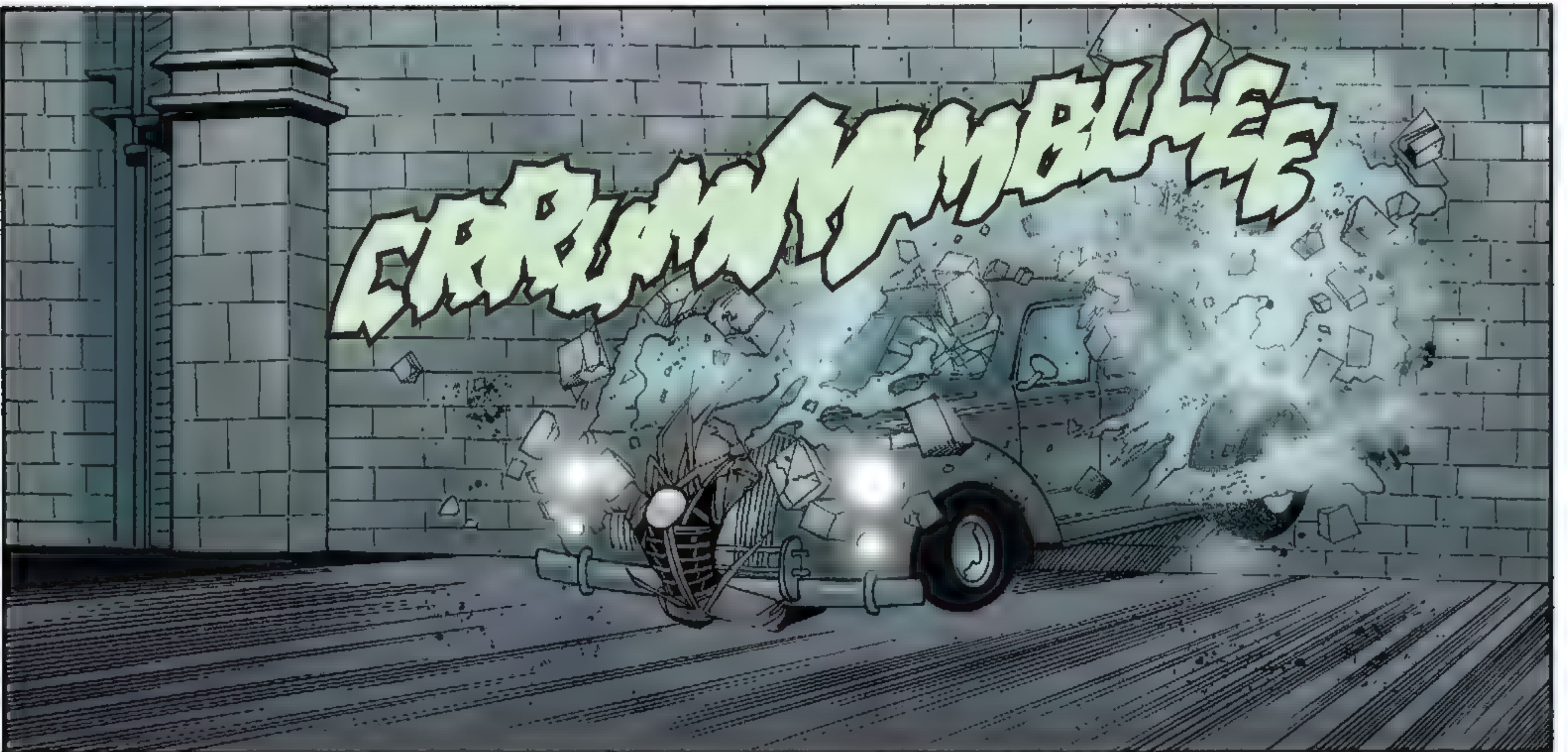
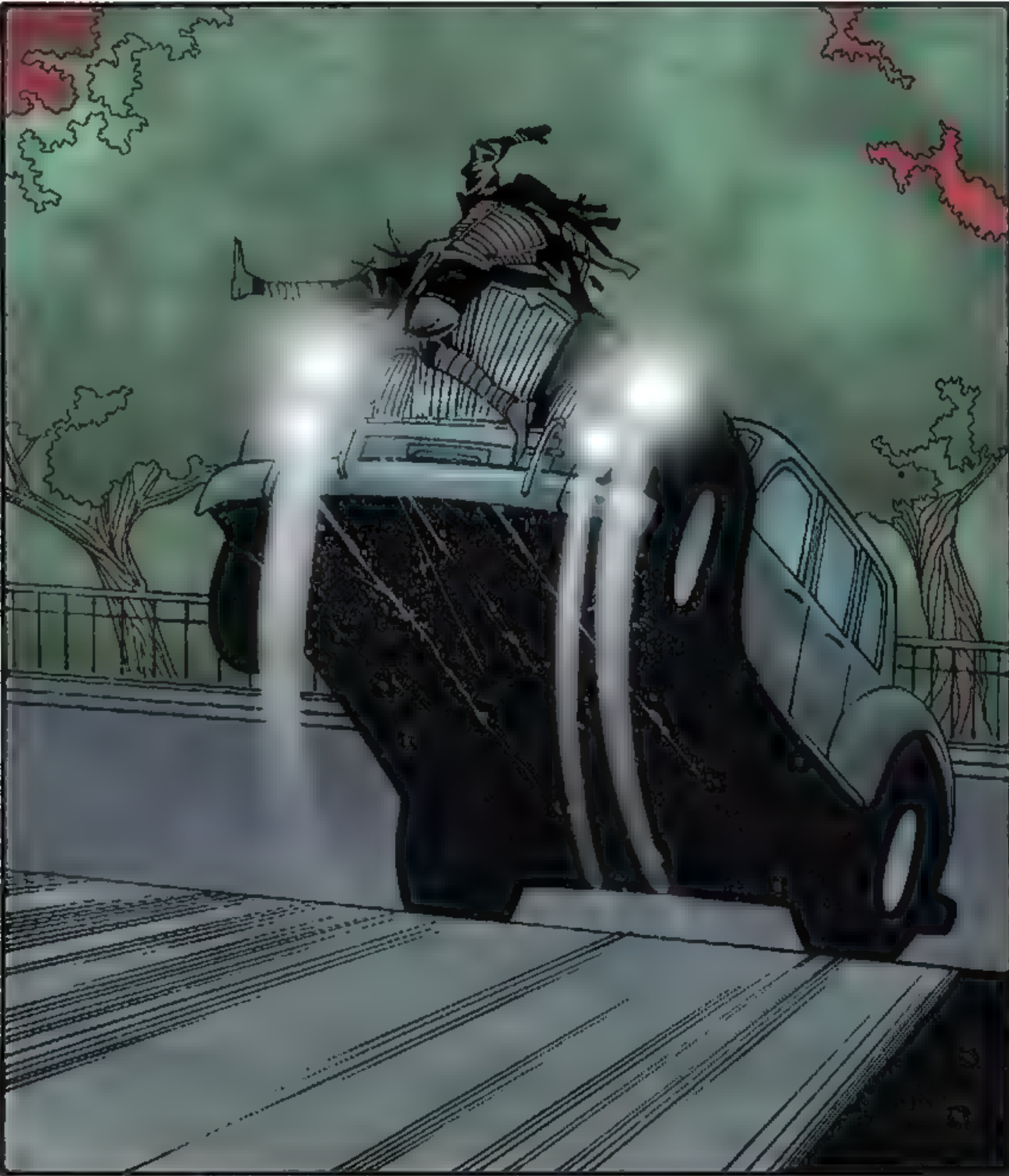
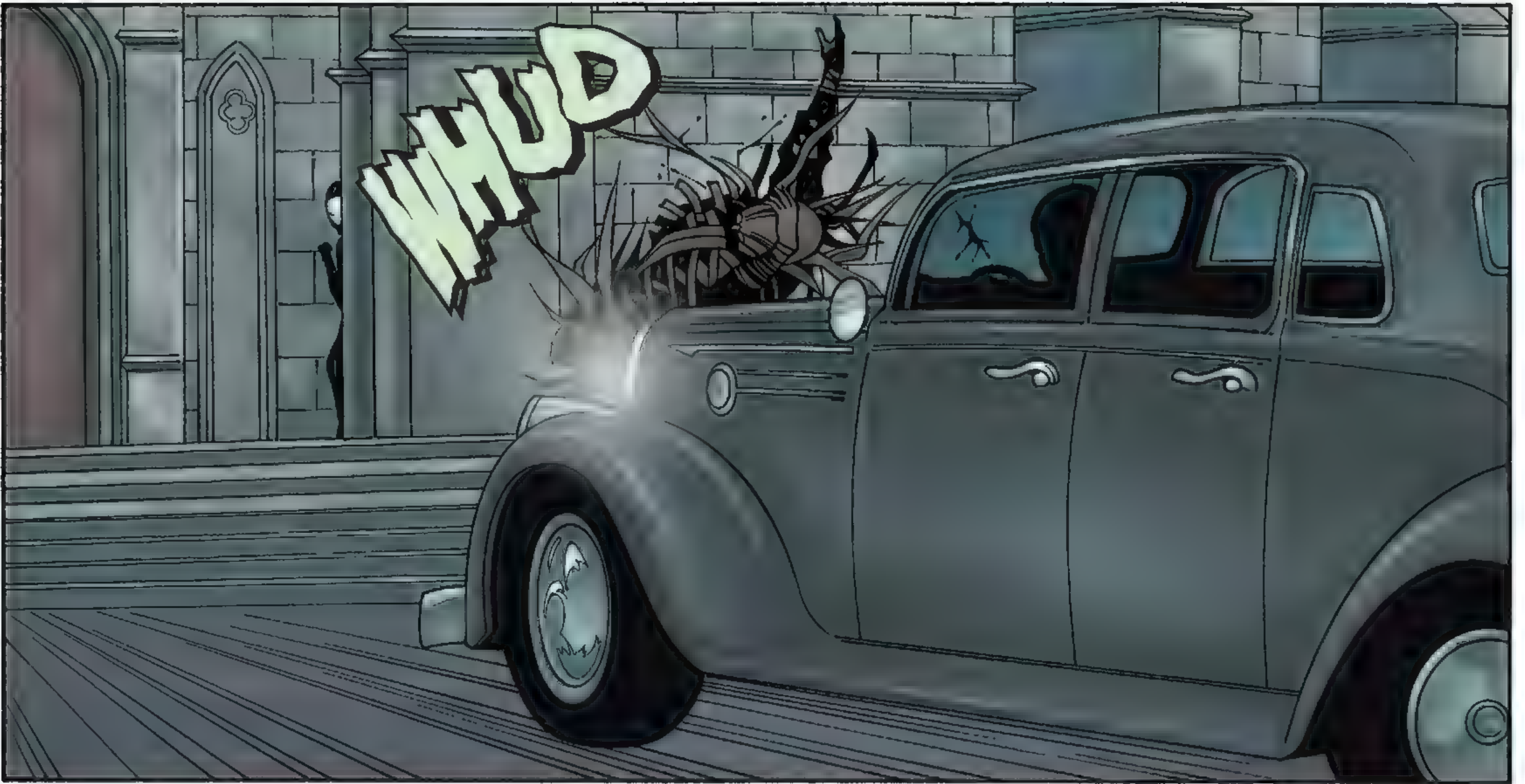
VERRRRRRRR
VERRRRRRRR

WHAT IS THAT
HORRIBLE ROAR?

SOME KIND OF WITCH...
IN AN IRON CHARIOT?

ALL RIGHT, YOU
EDGAR ALLAN POE-
LOOKING BASTARD,
PREPARE TO MEET
YOUR MAKER.

WHO, BY
THE LOOKS OF
YA, IS TIM
BURTON.





THIS WRETCHED WOMAN
OF ILL REPUTE IS CLEARLY IN
LEAGUE WITH THE OTHERS.

ULGH!

AND WHILE I AM ABLE TO
CRUSH THE BONES OF THIS
STRUMPET'S NECK EASILY
ENOUGH...

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

I WANT TO DRAW THE
OTHERS CLOSER.

BLAM
BLAM
KLIK

FINISH THEM
ALL AT ONCE.

KLIK
KLIK
KLIK
K

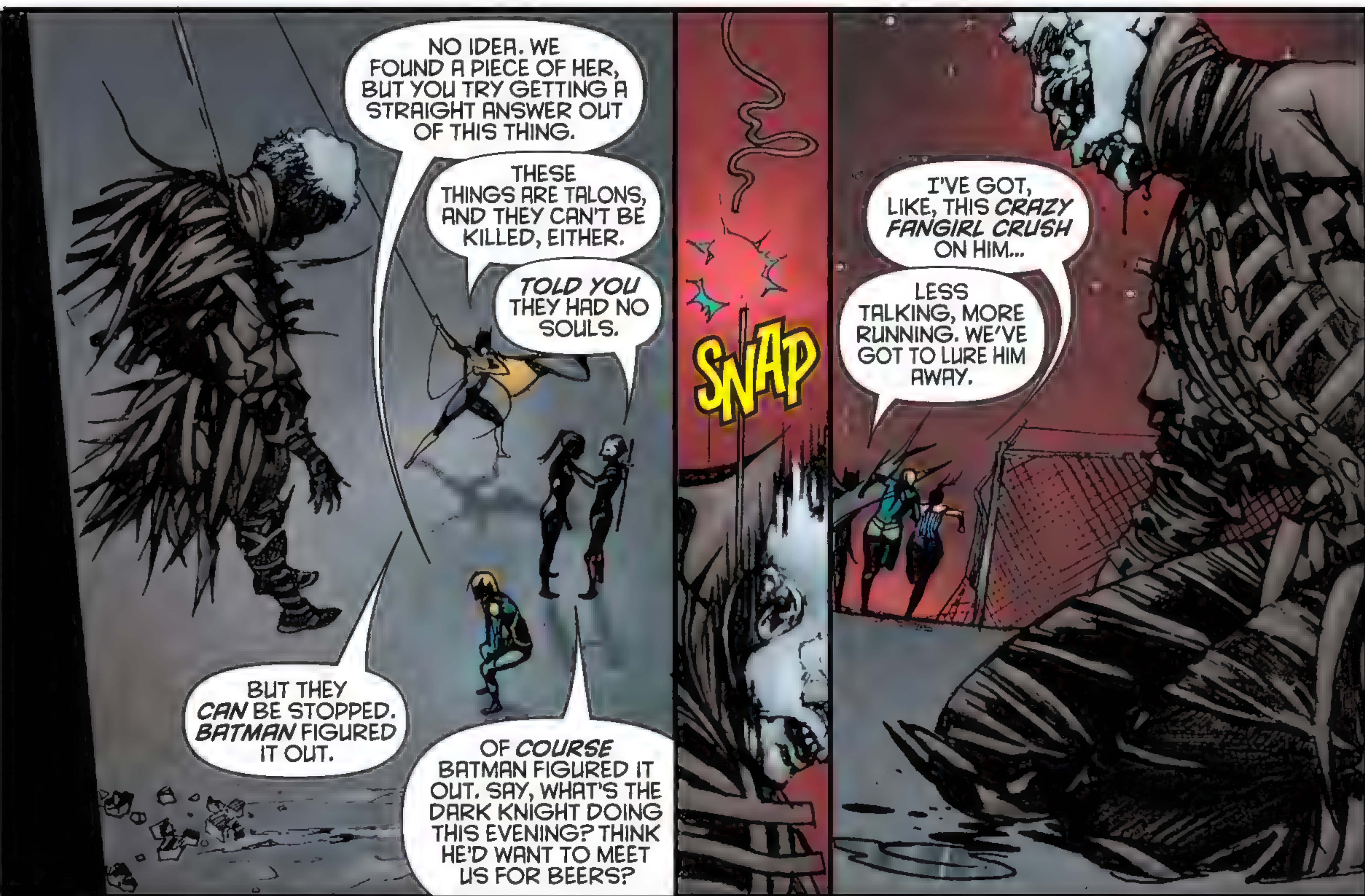


NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 9:03 PM...



HEY →KOFF←
JUNIOR *SHE-BAT*! SO
GLAD →KOFF KOFF←
YOU COULD HANG.

WHERE'S
POISON
IVY?



NO IDEA. WE
FOUND A PIECE OF HER,
BUT YOU TRY GETTING A
STRAIGHT ANSWER OUT
OF THIS THING.

THESE
THINGS ARE TALONS,
AND THEY CAN'T BE
KILLED, EITHER.

TOLD YOU
THEY HAD NO
SOULS.

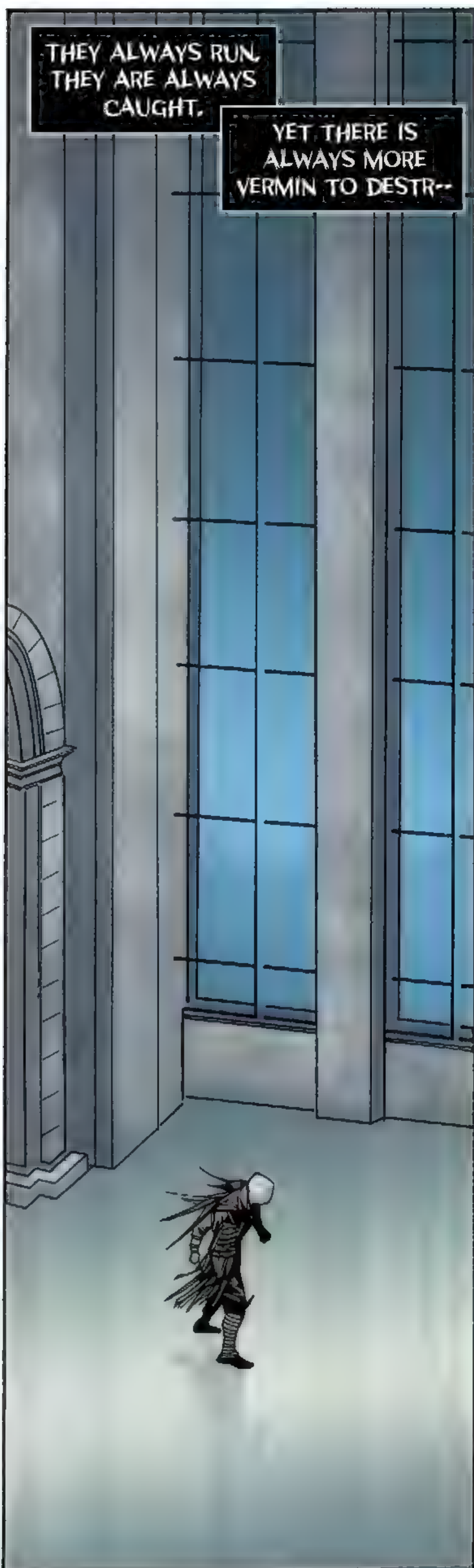
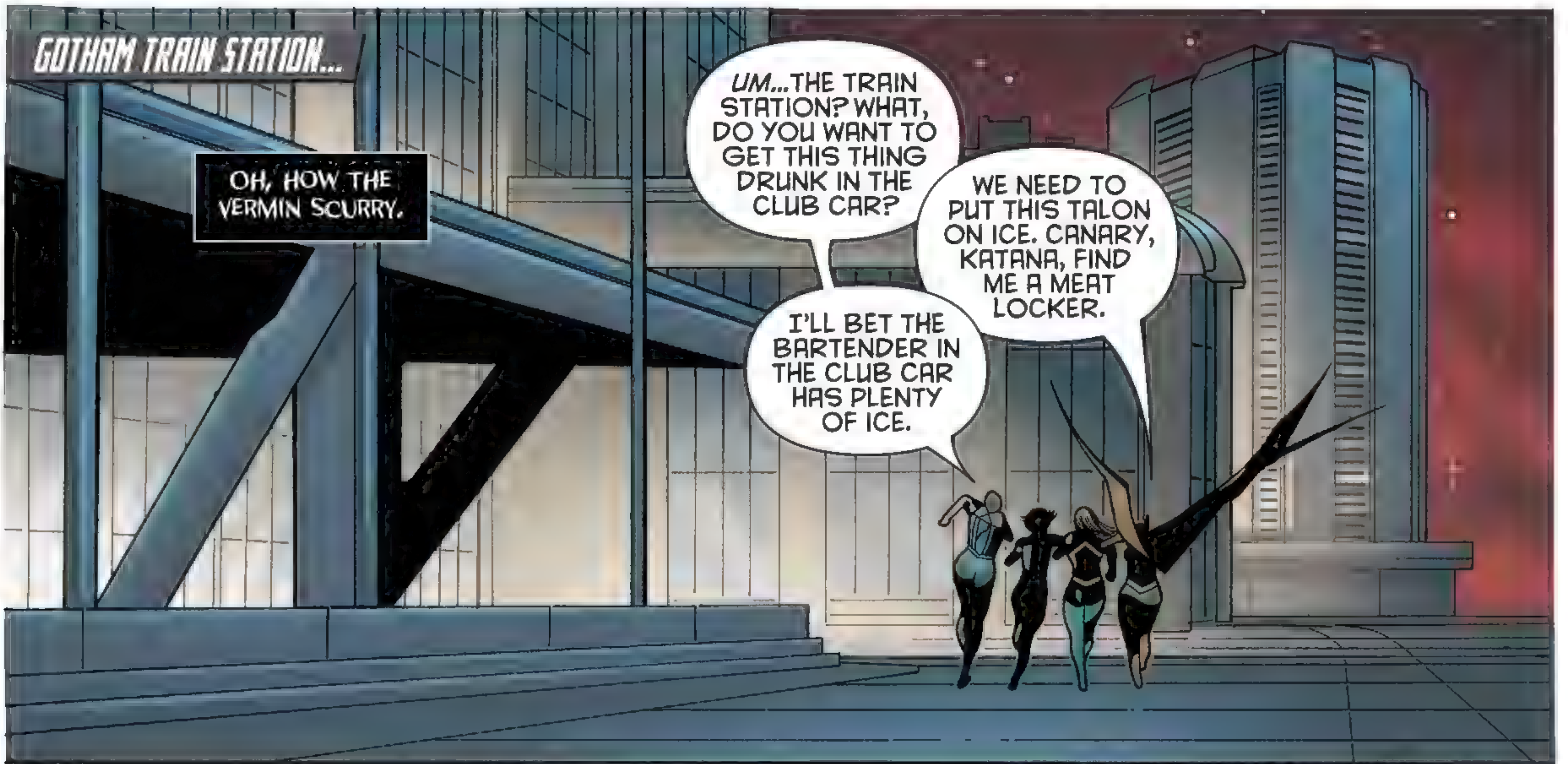
BUT THEY
CAN BE STOPPED.
BATMAN FIGURED
IT OUT.

OF COURSE
BATMAN FIGURED IT
OUT. SAY, WHAT'S THE
DARK KNIGHT DOING
THIS EVENING? THINK
HE'D WANT TO MEET
US FOR BEERS?

SNAP

I'VE GOT,
LIKE, THIS *CRAZY*
FANGIRL CRUSH
ON HIM...

LESS
TALKING, MORE
RUNNING. WE'VE
GOT TO LURE HIM
AWAY.



QUICK! GET HIM INSIDE! THIS BOXCAR'S FOR SHIPPING MEAT!

THE COLD! NOT THE DARK COLD AGAIN SO SOON!

NOT BEFORE I SERVE THE WILL OF THE COURT...

SLAM

WE HAVE TO KEEP HIM IN THERE. IF HIS CORE BODY TEMPERATURE PLUNGES ENOUGH, HE'LL SHUT DOWN.

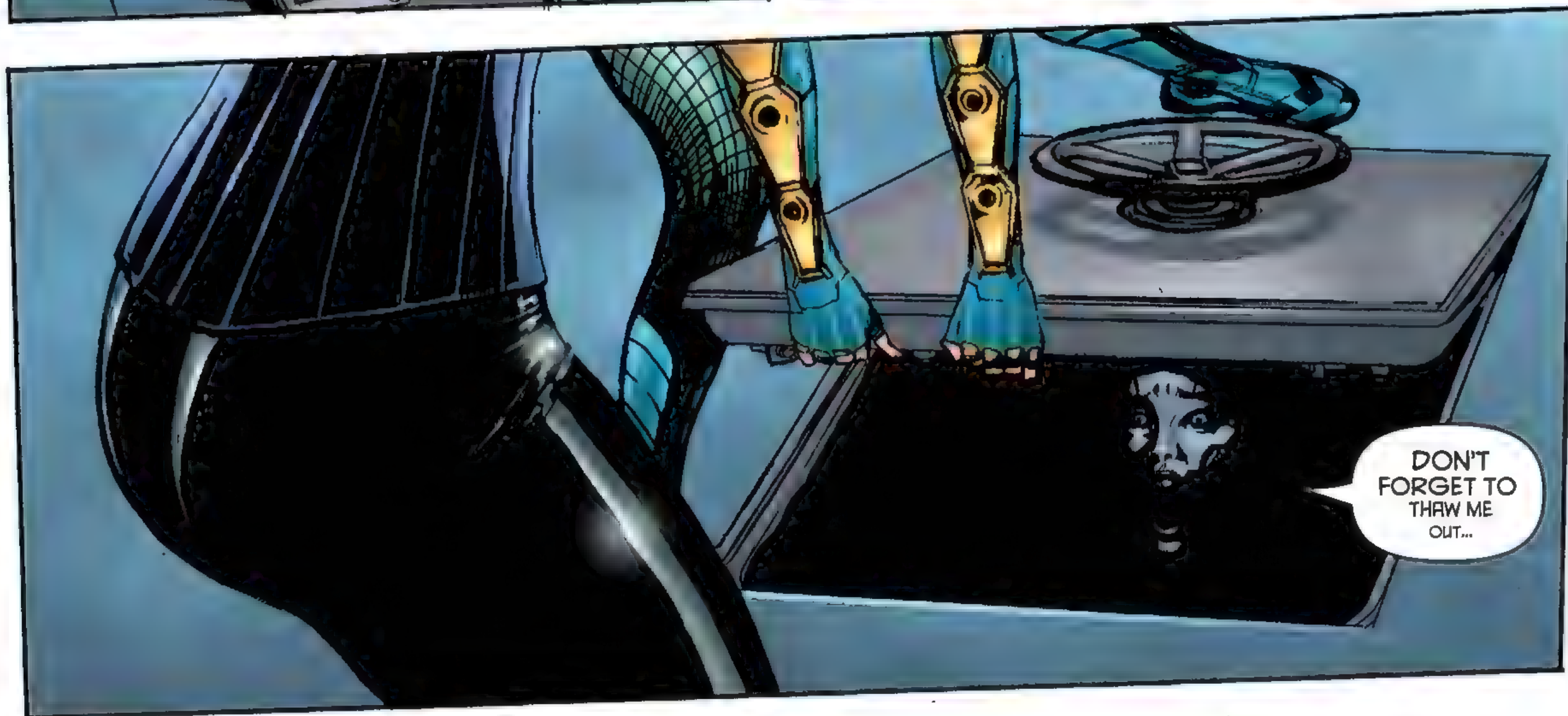
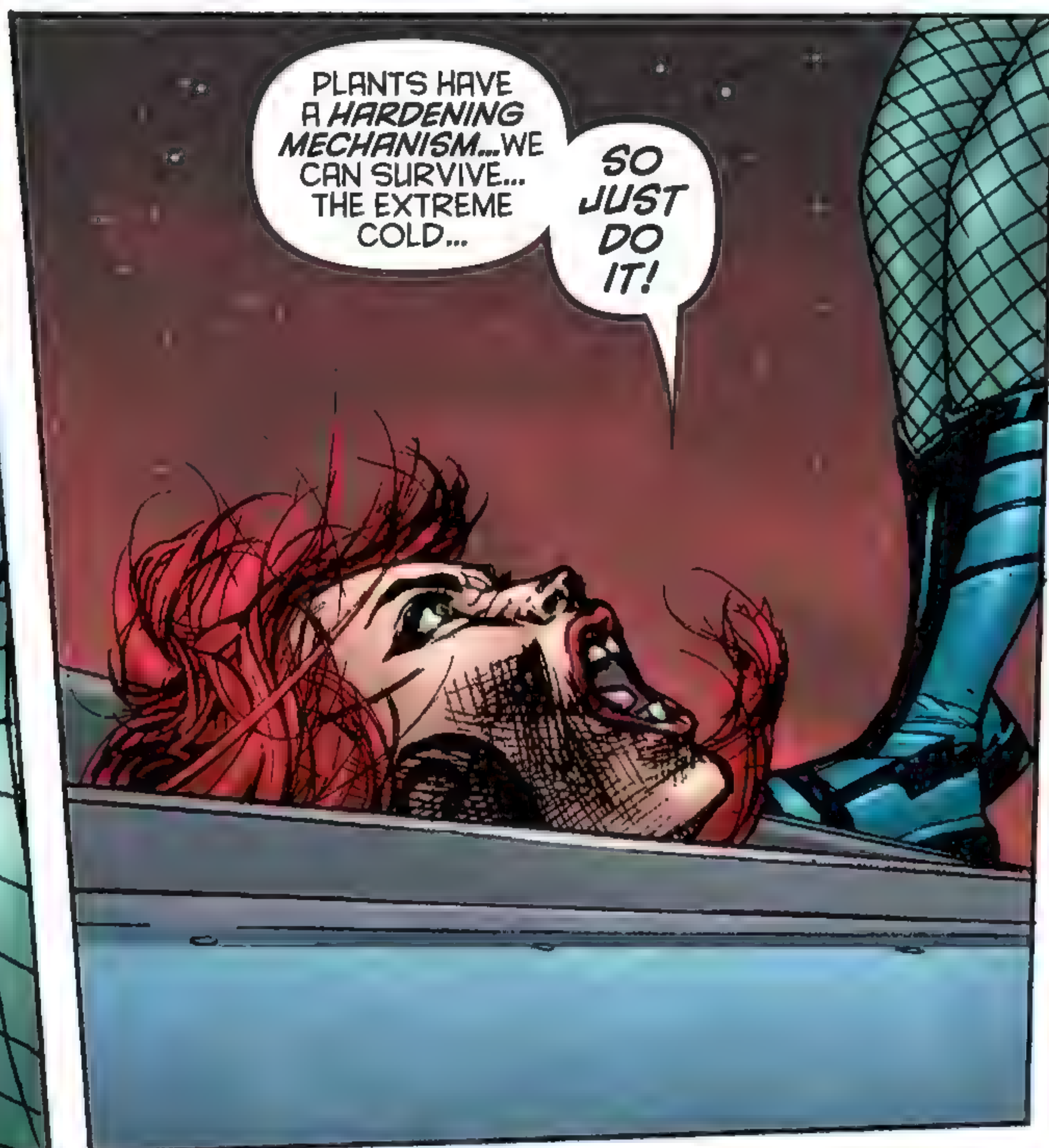
WELLLLL, THAT'S ICE TO KNOW--

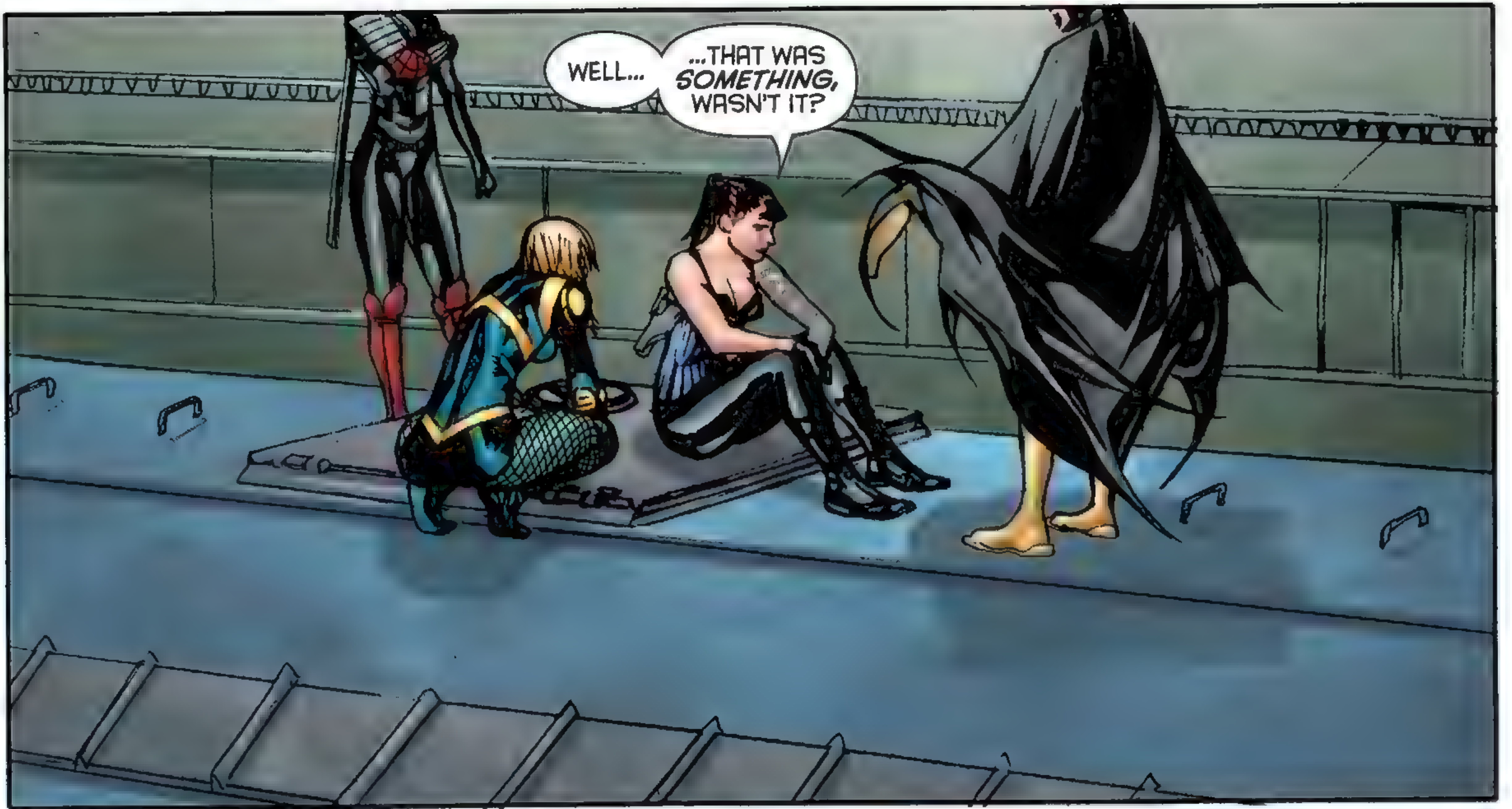
OOF

...AND DISPOSE OF THIS STREET VERMIN.

OH, HELL.

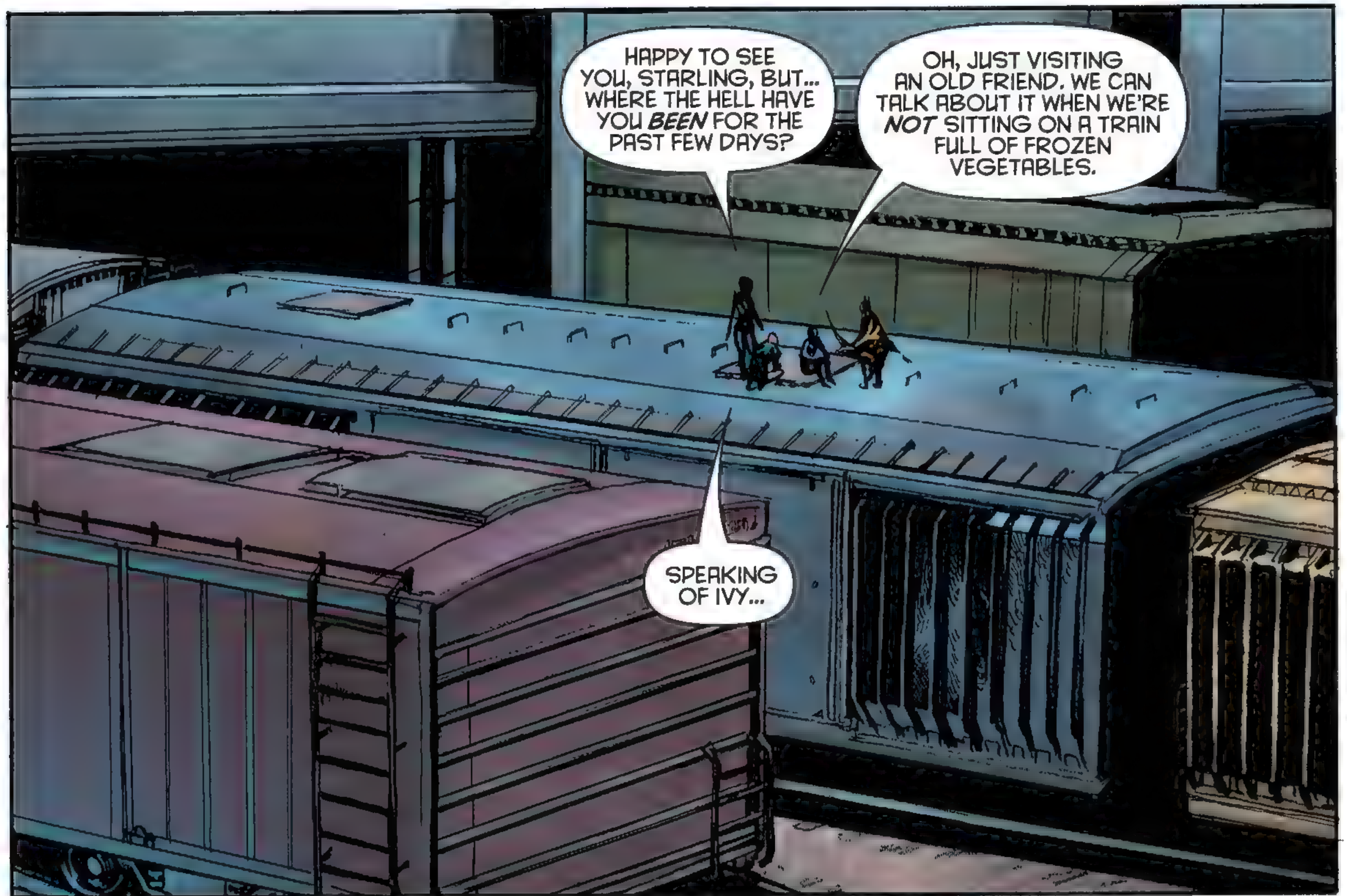






WELL...

...THAT WAS
SOMETHING,
WASN'T IT?



HAPPY TO SEE
YOU, STARLING, BUT...
WHERE THE HELL HAVE
YOU ***BEEN*** FOR THE
PAST FEW DAYS?

OH, JUST VISITING
AN OLD FRIEND. WE CAN
TALK ABOUT IT WHEN WE'RE
NOT SITTING ON A TRAIN
FULL OF FROZEN
VEGETABLES.

SPEAKING
OF IVY...




"...I MADE A PROMISE
TO HER MONTHS AGO."

W... ANNNND?!"

"WE'RE GOING
TO NEED SOME
MACHETES AND
A PLANE."



Tim
Burrows
+
Alex
Klein



"AS MUCH AS YOU BELIEVE IT'S YOUR CHOICE WHAT YOU CAN BECOME IN GOTHAM..."

"...IT'S IMPORTANT TO REALIZE WHAT YOUR PLACE COULD HAVE BEEN."

"AND ALL THAT WAS SACRIFICED IN ORDER TO PROCURE THAT FUTURE."

"FOR MOST OF THE YEAR THAT I COURTED HER, I ONLY MET AMELIA'S FATHER IN PASSING."

"...AND AN IMPORTANT MAN SUCH AS BURTON CROWNE HAD LITTLE TIME TO SPEND INVOLVED IN HIS DAUGHTER'S AFFAIRS."

"OUR RELATIONSHIP WAS DEFINED BY WEEKS APART AS I TRAVELED ON THE ROAD WITH HALY'S CIRCUS..."

"OR SO I THOUGHT."

"A MOMENT, WILLIAM?"

"I WONDER IF WE MIGHT TALK..."

"SIR?"

After witnessing the deaths of his parents as a boy, Dick Grayson was taken under Batman's wing, becoming Robin, the Boy Wonder. But when the Boy Wonder became a man, he shed the identity of Robin and branded himself as...

NIGHTWING

...ABOUT WHAT *EXACTLY* YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING WITH MY DAUGHTER.

ARE YOU A FAN OF CHESS, WILLIAM? SUCH A PURE GAME. TWO SIDES AND TWO SIDES ONLY--LIGHT AND DARK... *BLACK AND WHITE*.

MUCH LIKE THIS CITY.

I'M AFRAID I DON'T UNDERSTAND, MR. CROWNE...

THE WHITE PIECES, WHICH ALWAYS MOVE *FIRST*, ARE THE MOST POWERFUL. THEY'RE THE ONES WHO *MATTER*.

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO PLAY CHESS, WILLIAM?

I... DON'T, SIR.

HM. OF COURSE YOU DON'T. WHICH IS EXACTLY MY POINT.

YOU MAY HAVE PULLED YOURSELF OUT OF THE SLUMS, WILLIAM, BUT YOU'RE STILL LIVING IN *FILTH*.

A CITY OF LIGHT AND DARK *HAS* NO MIDDLE. IT NEVER HAS...

...AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO CHANGE THAT.

Owls...it all comes back to the Owls.

NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 8:22 PM...

GOthAM CITY HALL.

The man in front of me
is William Cobb--an
assassin for the Court
of Owls--a Talon...

...and also my
great-grandfather.

Last time I saw him was
in the Batcave, pumped
full of a cooling agent
to keep his regenerative
abilities in check.

If he's here now,
it means Batman
has lost the
Batcave. Or--

No--don't think
like that. Not
now. Focus,
Dick.

People are
counting on
you.

MAYOR HADY...
DEPUTY MAYOR
KAVANAUGH...
DOES CITY HALL
HAVE A PANIC
ROOM?

I
DON'T...I'M
NOT...

THE
FOURTH
FLOOR--
THERE'S A
VAULT!

GO LOCK
YOURSELVES
INSIDE--

--AND
DON'T OPEN
IT FOR ANY-
ONE!



RICHARD GRAYSON--THE GREAT BETRAYER OF GOTHAM'S HERITAGE.

MY BLOOD.

MY HEIR.

SUCH A WASTE.

GUESS...
->EHNN-< WE'LL HAVE TO AGREE...
->EHNN-< TO DISAGREE THERE.

THEN SHOW ME, RICHARD--SHOW ME WHAT YOU'VE BECOME.

IMPRESS ME.

SCHK

KSSSHH

POOM

THUNK



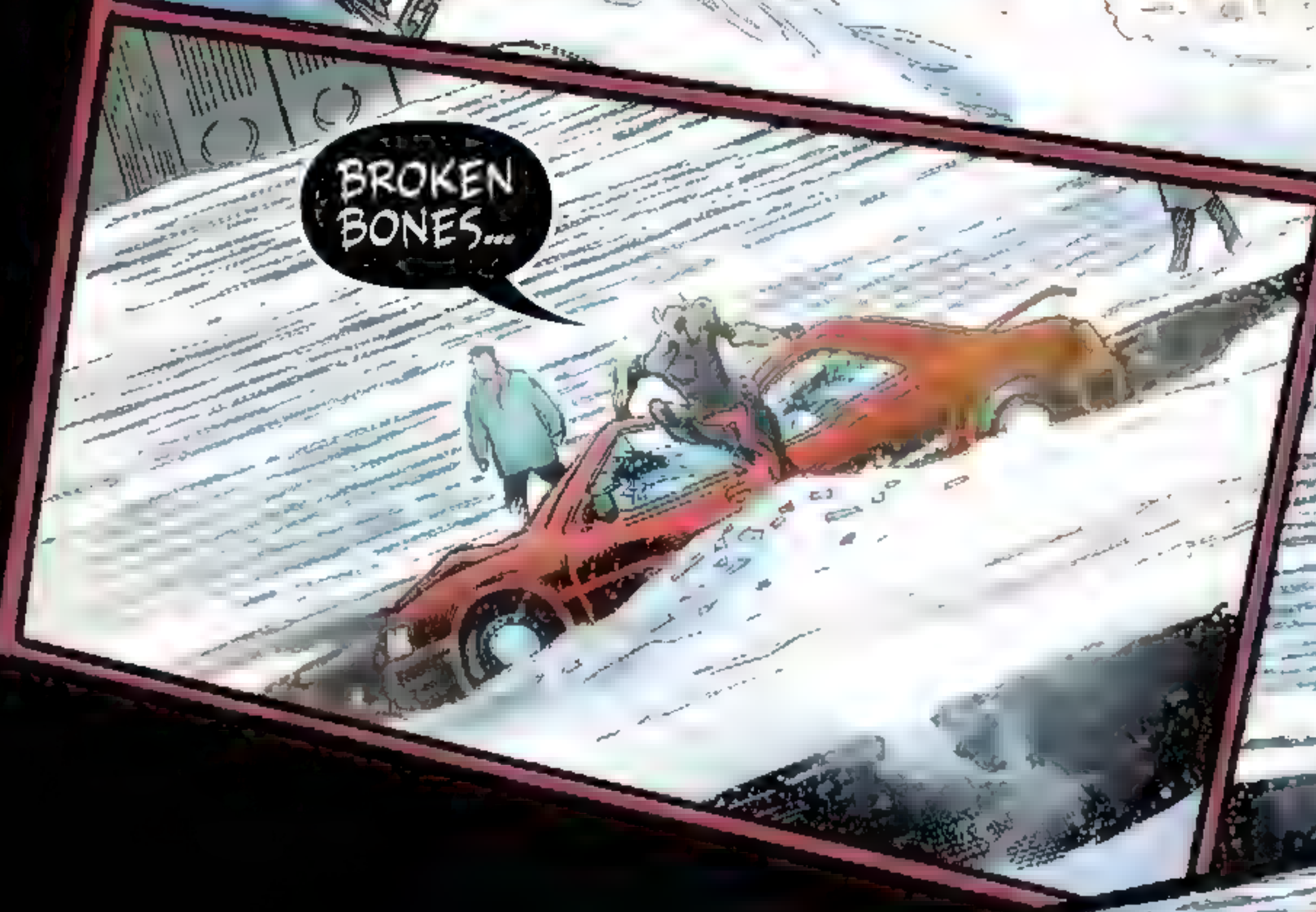
CRASH

ARGH!



UGH!

THUD



BROKEN BONES...



...FOR SOMEONE...

SKRAK



...WHO REGENERATES?

KA-KRAK



I SAID...

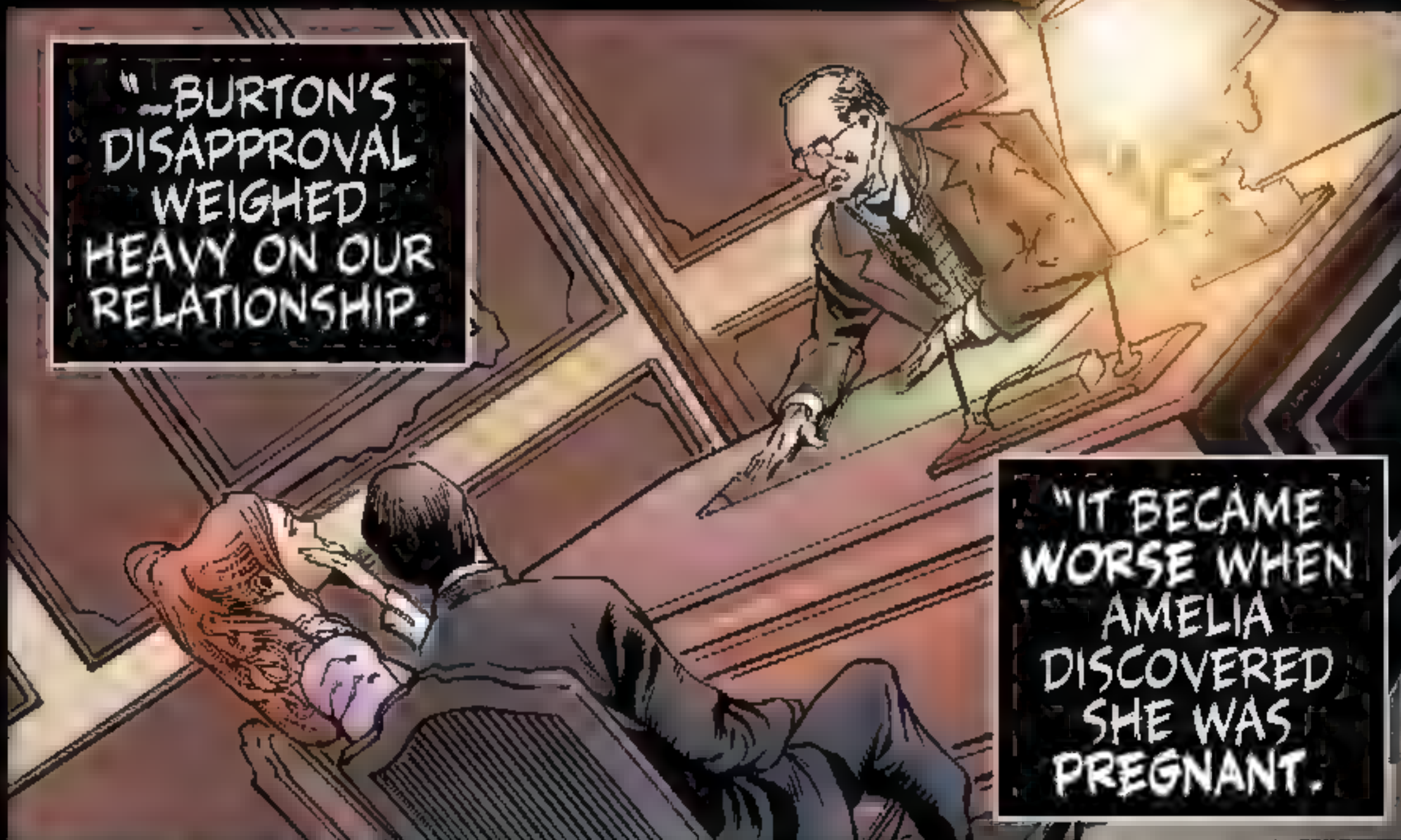
KRAKKN

POP POP



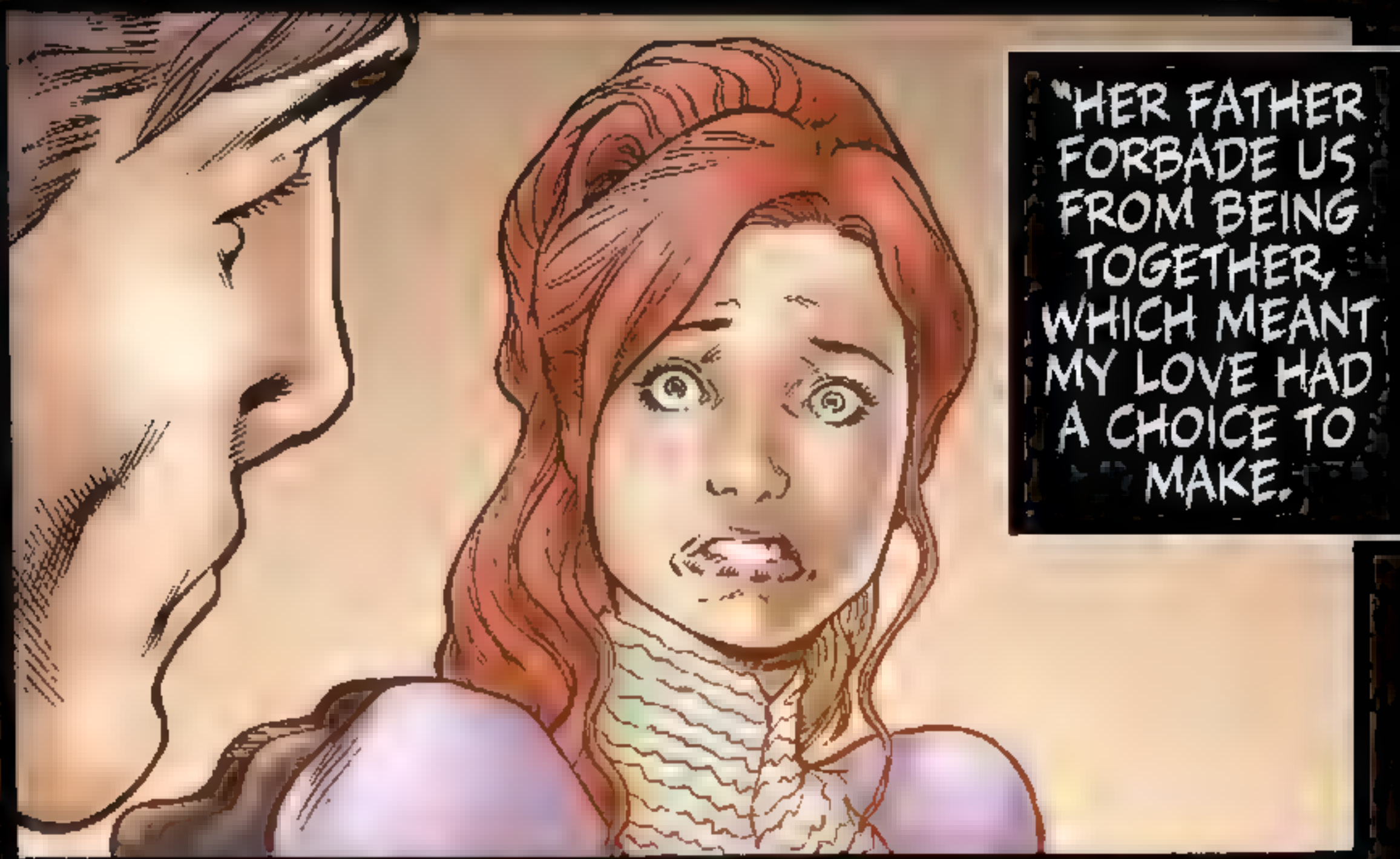
...IMPRESS ME.

"THOUGH WE TRIED TO PUT THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER..."



"BURTON'S DISAPPROVAL WEIGHED HEAVY ON OUR RELATIONSHIP."

"IT BECAME WORSE WHEN AMELIA DISCOVERED SHE WAS PREGNANT."



"HER FATHER FORBADE US FROM BEING TOGETHER, WHICH MEANT MY LOVE HAD A CHOICE TO MAKE."

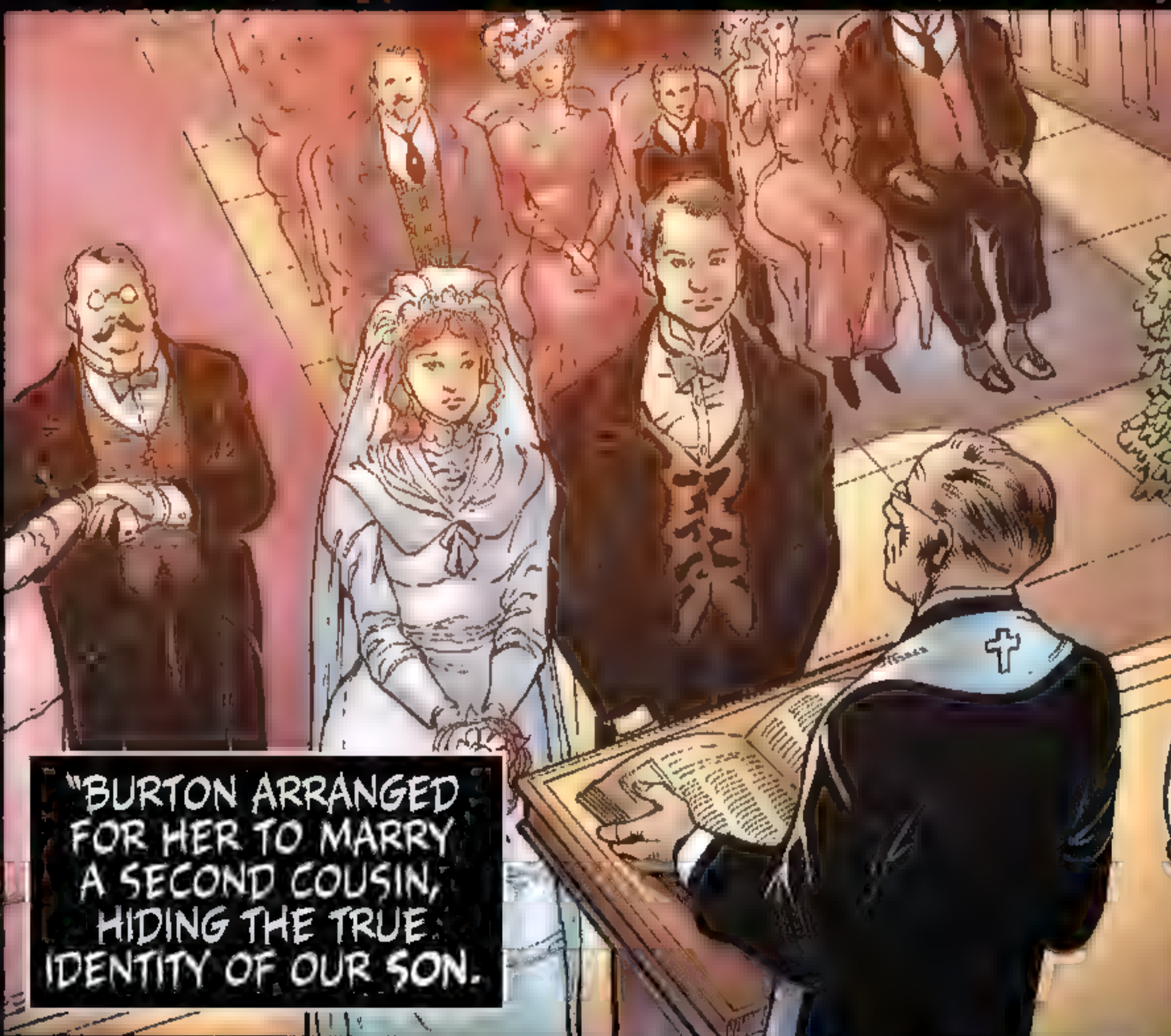


"ALTHOUGH I SUPPOSE IT WAS NEVER REALLY A CHOICE AT ALL."



IT WILL BE OKAY, MY DEAR...IT WILL ALL BE OKAY...

"EVERY TIE BETWEEN AMELIA AND MYSELF WAS SEVERED."



"BURTON ARRANGED FOR HER TO MARRY A SECOND COUSIN, HIDING THE TRUE IDENTITY OF OUR SON."



"FOR ALL THE CITY WOULD EVER KNOW, THE CHILD WOULD BE A CROWNE."

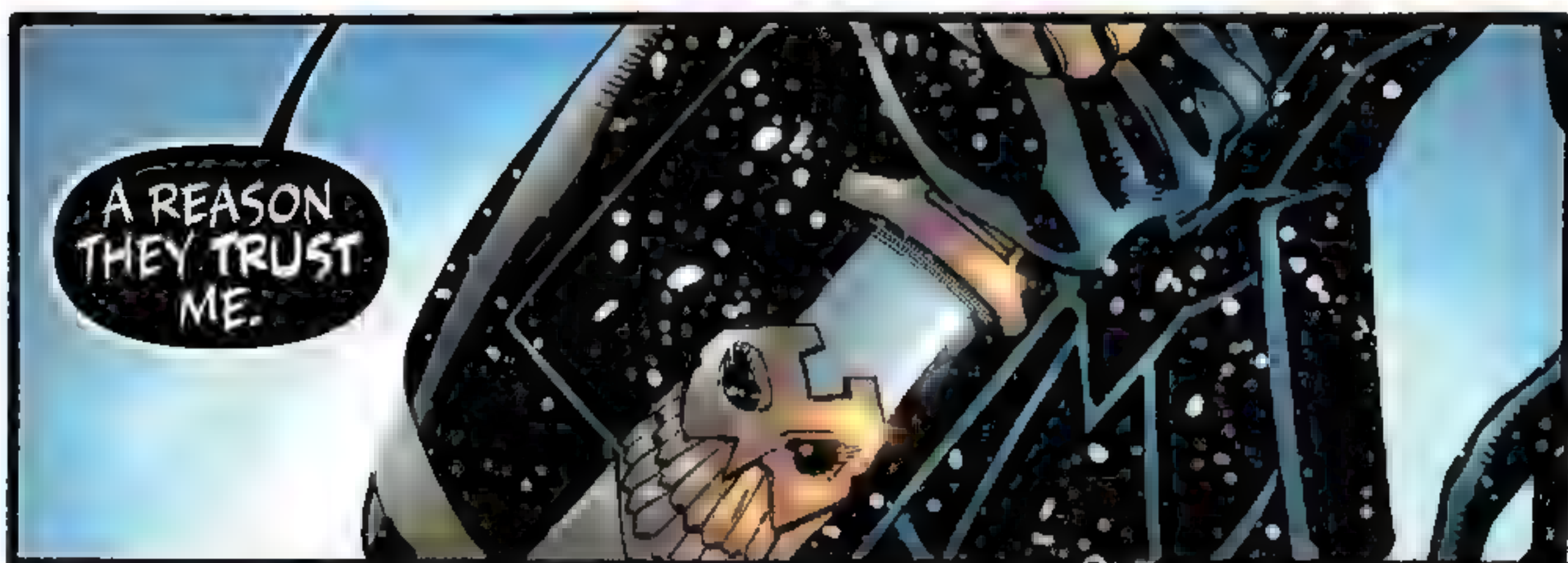
"AS HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE."



"I HAD STARTED AS NOTHING, AND IN THE EYES OF THOSE WHO MATTERED, WOULD ALWAYS BE NOTHING."

"NO MATTER WHAT."

"THAT WAS GOTHAM CITY."



OF COURSE I COULD SEE YOU.

JUST AS I COULD SEE ALL THE LITTLE TOYS YOU BOTH THINK ALLOW YOU TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN GOTHAM.

ALL THE GADGETS AND COSTUMES YOU DELUDE YOURSELVES WITH.

BUT MOST OF ALL, I COULD SEE WHAT YOU'VE BECOME, RICHARD--A SECOND RATE IMITATION OF A NAÏVE MAN.

IT'S PATHETIC FOR A GRAYSON.

He's not going to stop until he kills me.

POOM

TELL YOU WHAT--WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME--

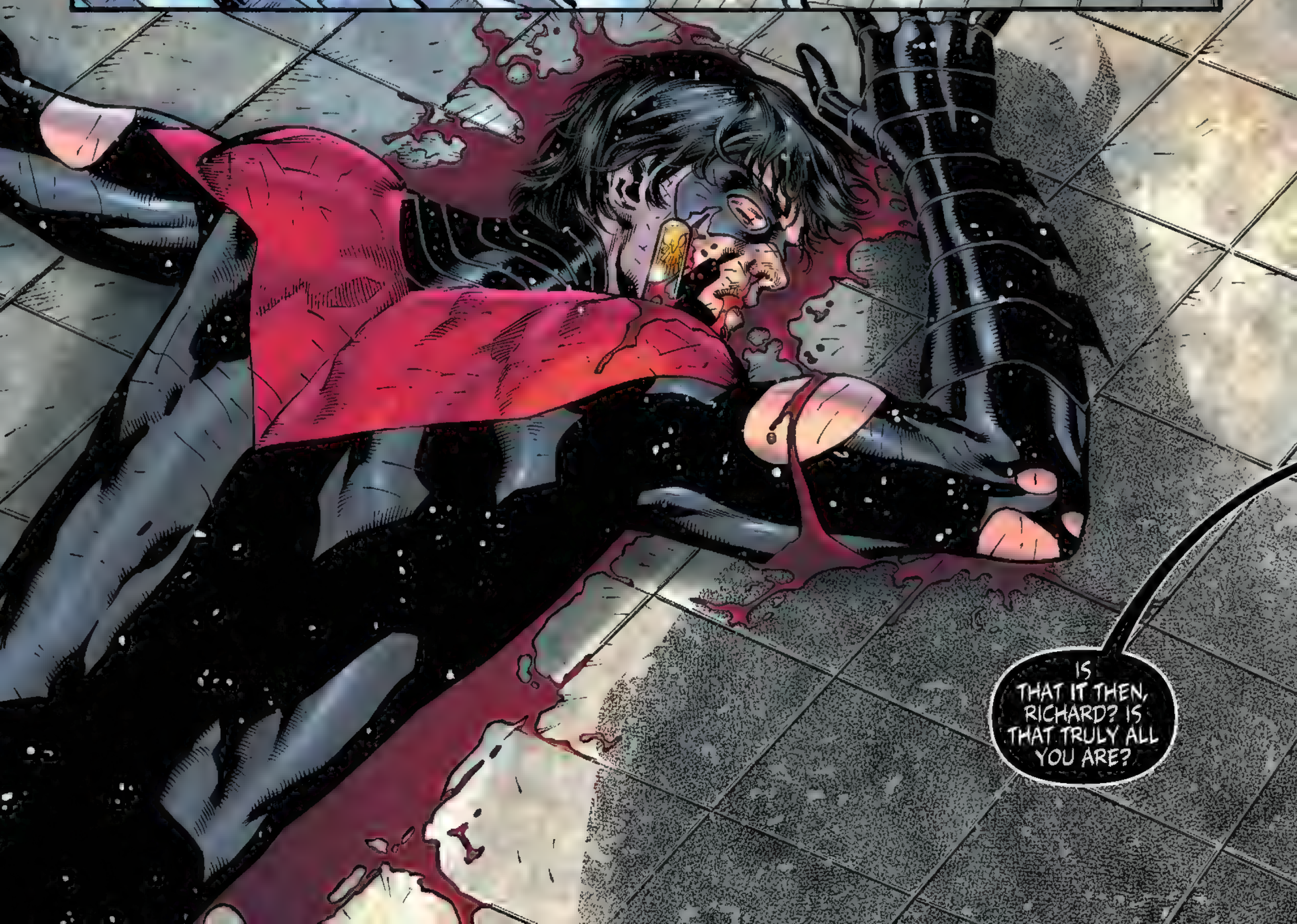
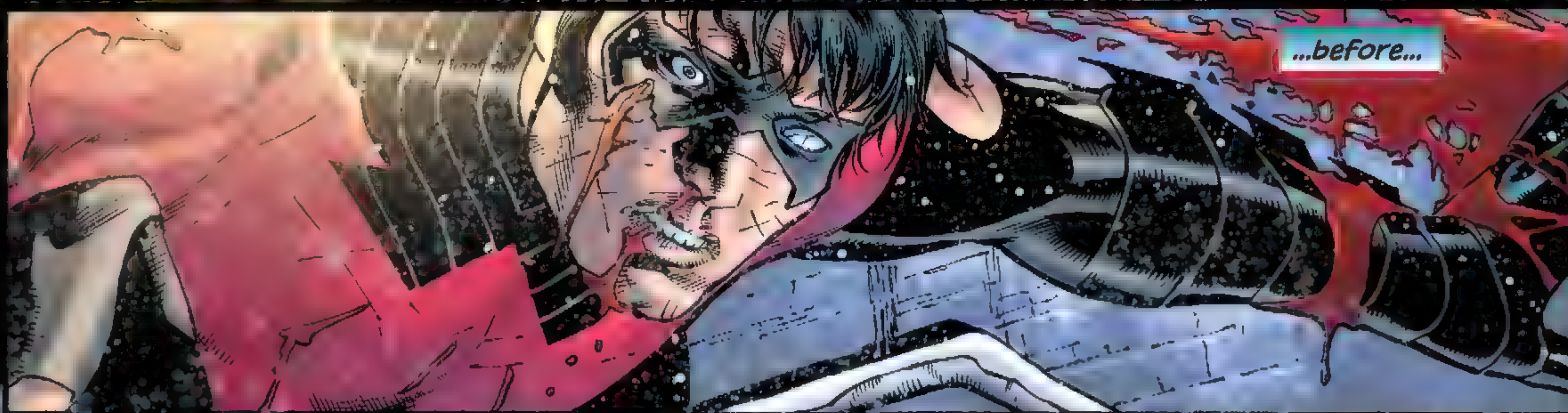
HRK!

--WHAT YOU SEE FROM UP THERE?

Even at full strength I don't know if I could beat him like this.

And I've lost a lot of blood...

...from that other Talon attack...



EXIT

AS MUCH AS
YOU BELIEVE IT'S
YOUR CHOICE WHAT
YOU CAN BECOME
IN GOTHAM...

HNNN...

...IT'S IMPORTANT
TO REALIZE WHAT
YOUR PLACE COULD
HAVE BEEN.


23

23



AND
ALL THAT WAS
SACRIFICED IN ORDER
TO PROCURE THAT
FUTURE WHICH YOU
REJECTED.







YOU LOVED
HER, DIDN'T YOU,
WILLIAM?

IT DOESN'T
MATTER,
NATHANIEL.


NOT IN A
PLACE LIKE
GOTHAM.




YOU
KNOW...IT
DOESN'T *HAVE*
TO BE THAT
WAY.



WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?

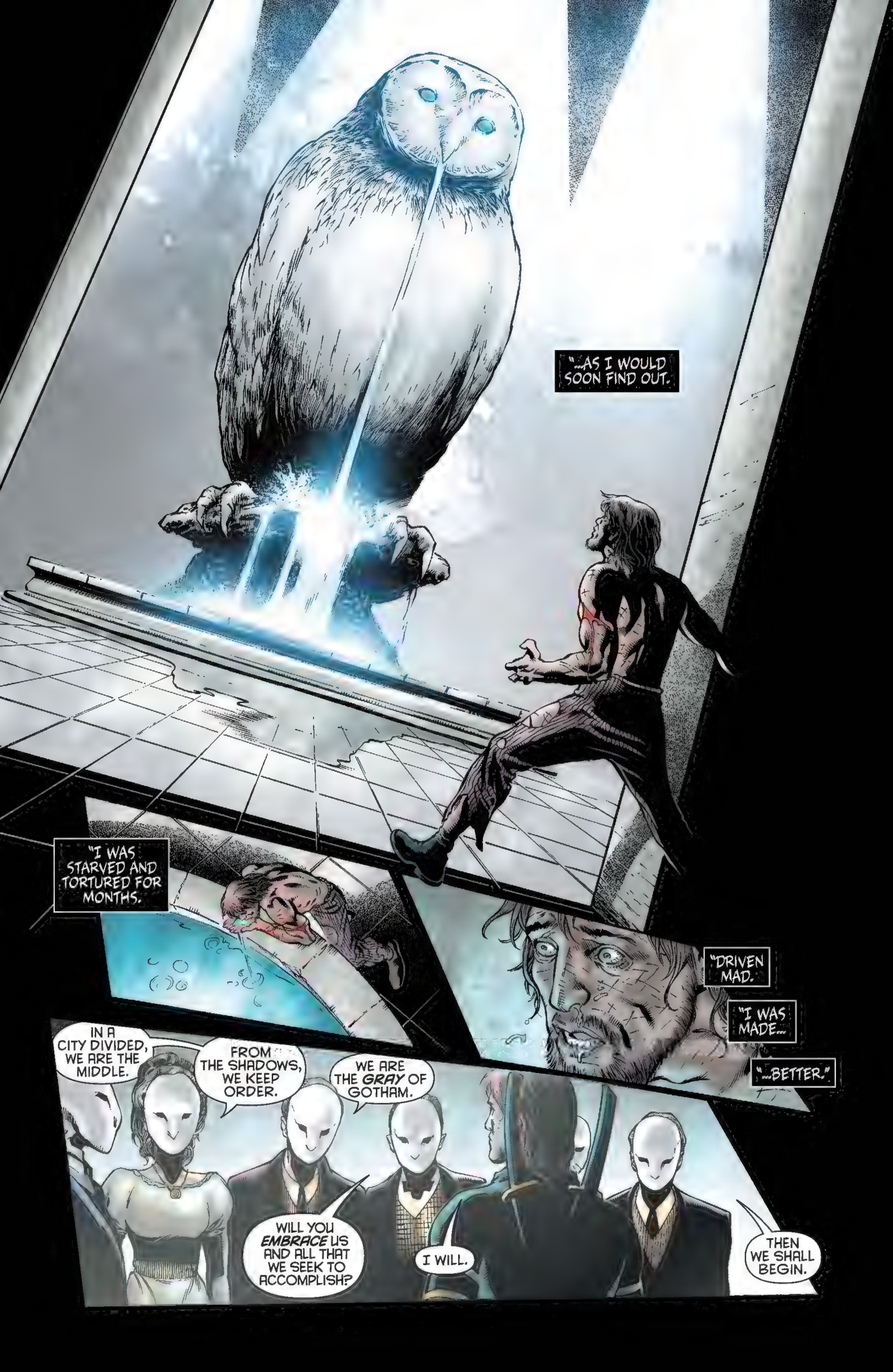


WHAT IF I
TOLD YOU...I HAD
A WAY FOR YOU TO
CHANGE THIS CITY?
FOREVER. WHAT IF
I TOLD YOU...



...I HAD A
WAY FOR YOU
TO *TRULY*
MATTER?

"BUT IT WAS FAR
FROM SIMPLE..."



"...AS I WOULD
SOON FIND OUT."

"I WAS
STARVED AND
TORTURED FOR
MONTHS."

"DRIVEN
MAD."

"I WAS
MADE..."

"...BETTER."

IN A
CITY DIVIDED,
WE ARE THE
MIDDLE.

FROM
THE SHADOWS,
WE KEEP
ORDER.

WE ARE
THE *GRAY* OF
GOTHAM.

WILL YOU
EMBRACE US
AND ALL THAT
WE SEEK TO
ACCOMPLISH?

I WILL.

THEN
WE SHALL
BEGIN.



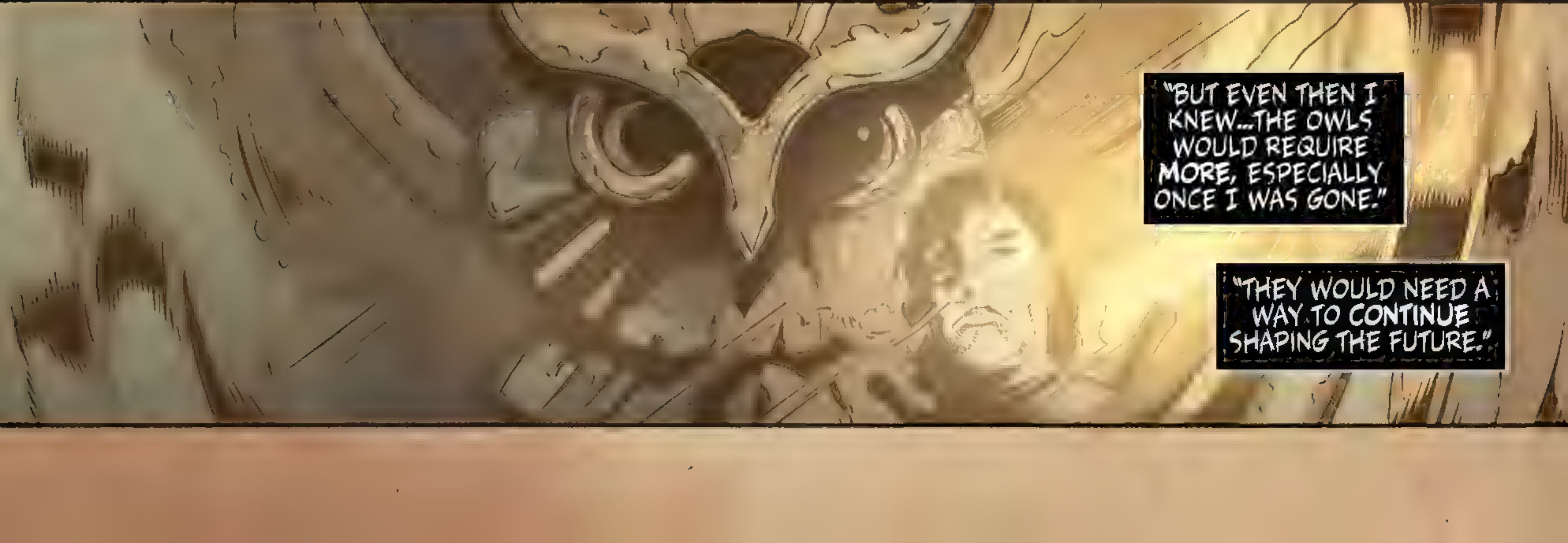
"THE FIRST
YEAR WAS
LIBERATING."

"I WAS MAKING A
DIFFERENCE IN THIS CITY
THE ONLY WAY ONE CAN.
THE ONLY WAY THAT
WORKS."



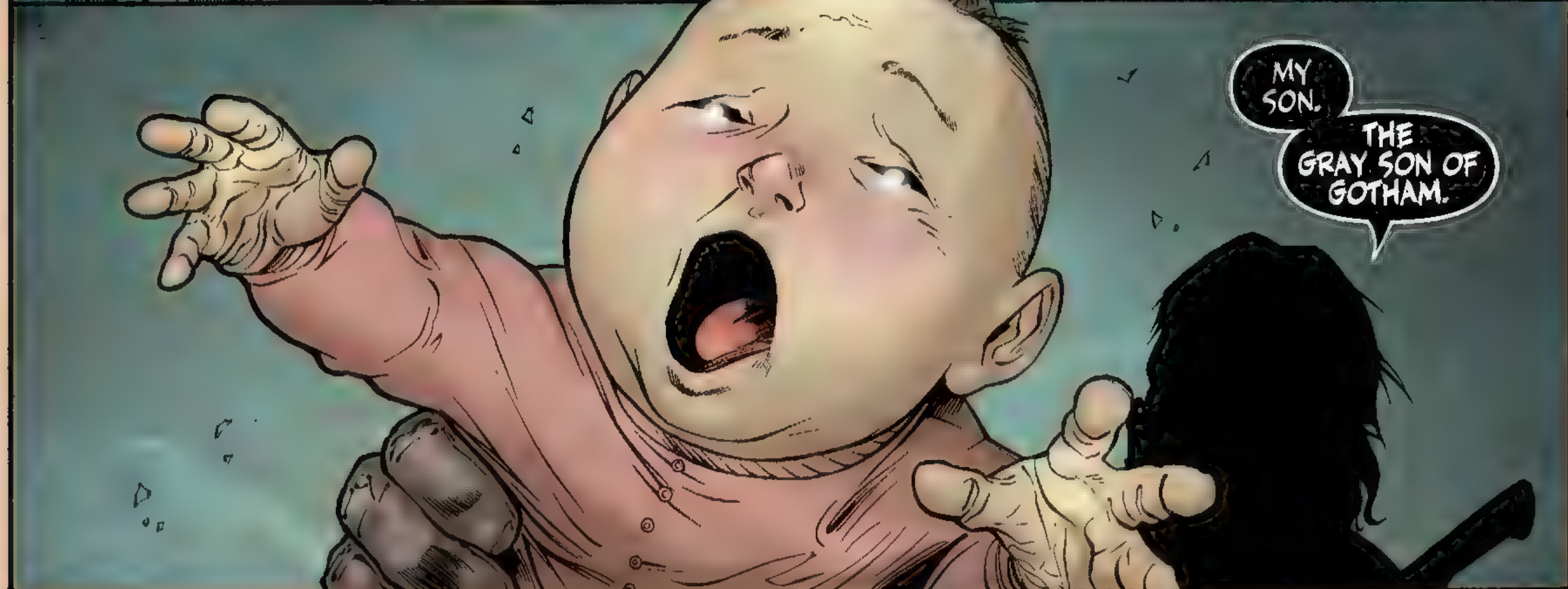
"I HAD FOUND
MY TRUE PLACE
IN GOTHAM."

"I WAS
SHAPING THE
FUTURE."



"BUT EVEN THEN I
KNEW...THE OWLS
WOULD REQUIRE
MORE, ESPECIALLY
ONCE I WAS GONE."

"THEY WOULD NEED A
WAY TO CONTINUE
SHAPING THE FUTURE."



DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT YOU COULD HAVE BECOME, RICHARD? THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT YOU'VE BETRAYED?

IT'S NOT SIMPLY THAT YOU WERE CHOSEN BY THE COURT TO HELP SAVE GOTHAM... IT'S THAT YOU WERE BRED FOR IT.

BUT WHAT YOU DO NOW...NONE OF IT MATTERS. NONE OF IT WORKS. YOU'RE JUST ONE MORE PERSON WHO THINKS THEY CAN BELONG, BUT WILL NEVER RISE HIGHER THAN "SECOND BEST."

GOTHAM IS A CITY OF BIRDS--A CITY OF OWLS. WITHOUT US, NOTHING WILL EVER CHANGE. AND YOU? YOU'LL NEVER BE MORE THAN AN IMITATION WAYNE...AND A KNOCKOFF BAT.

BUT WITH US, RICHARD? WELL...

UGH!

SHRIIP

...YOU COULD BE THE GREATEST BIRD OF ALL

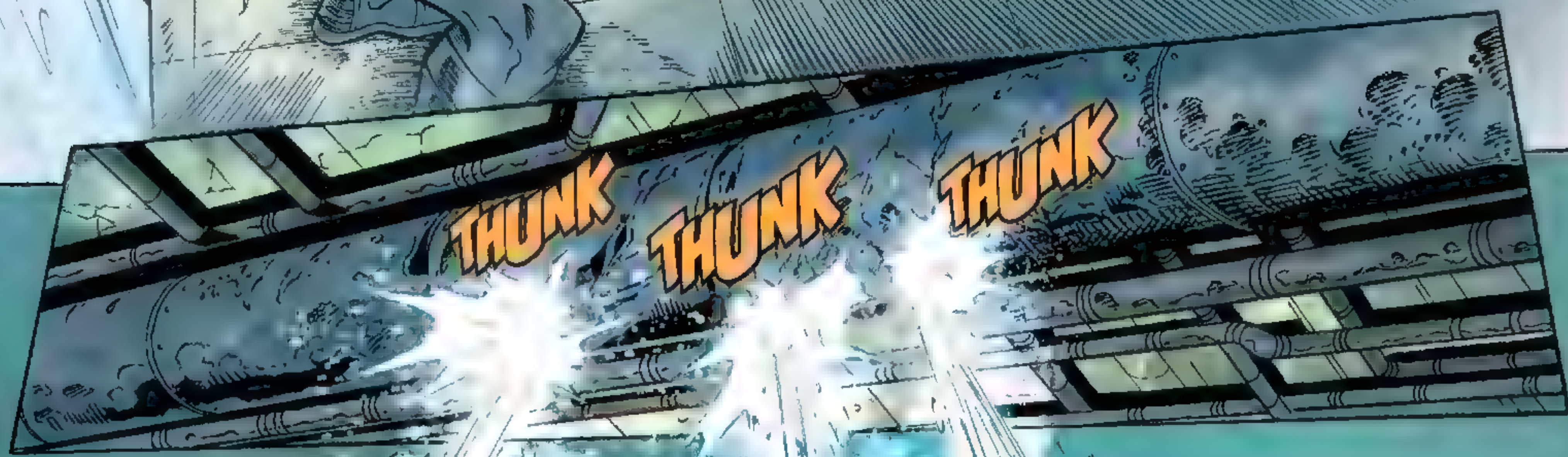
YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT GOTHAM NOT CHANGING, WILLIAM... IT DOES CHANGE.

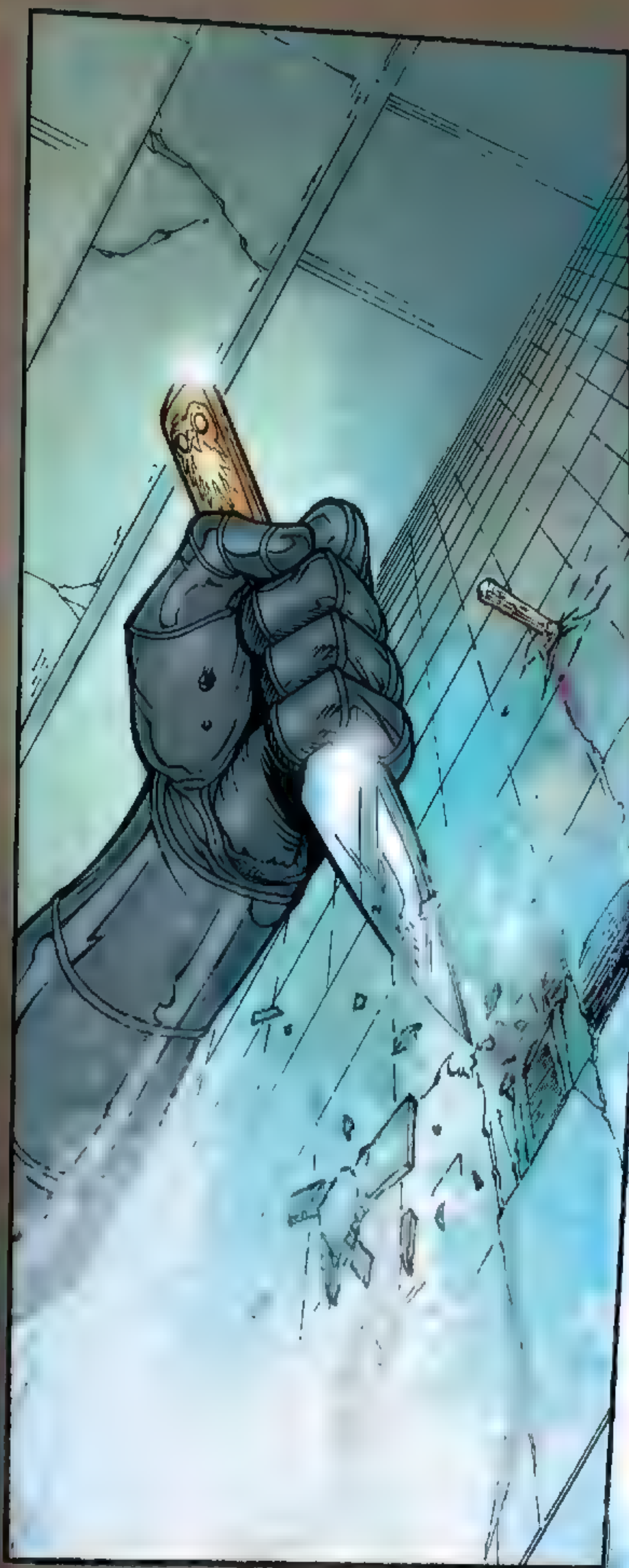
TAKE THIS SUBWAY, FOR EXAMPLE. AS THE CITY BECAME MORE MODERN...THE POWER COMPANIES NEEDED A WAY TO INSULATE THEIR CABLES.

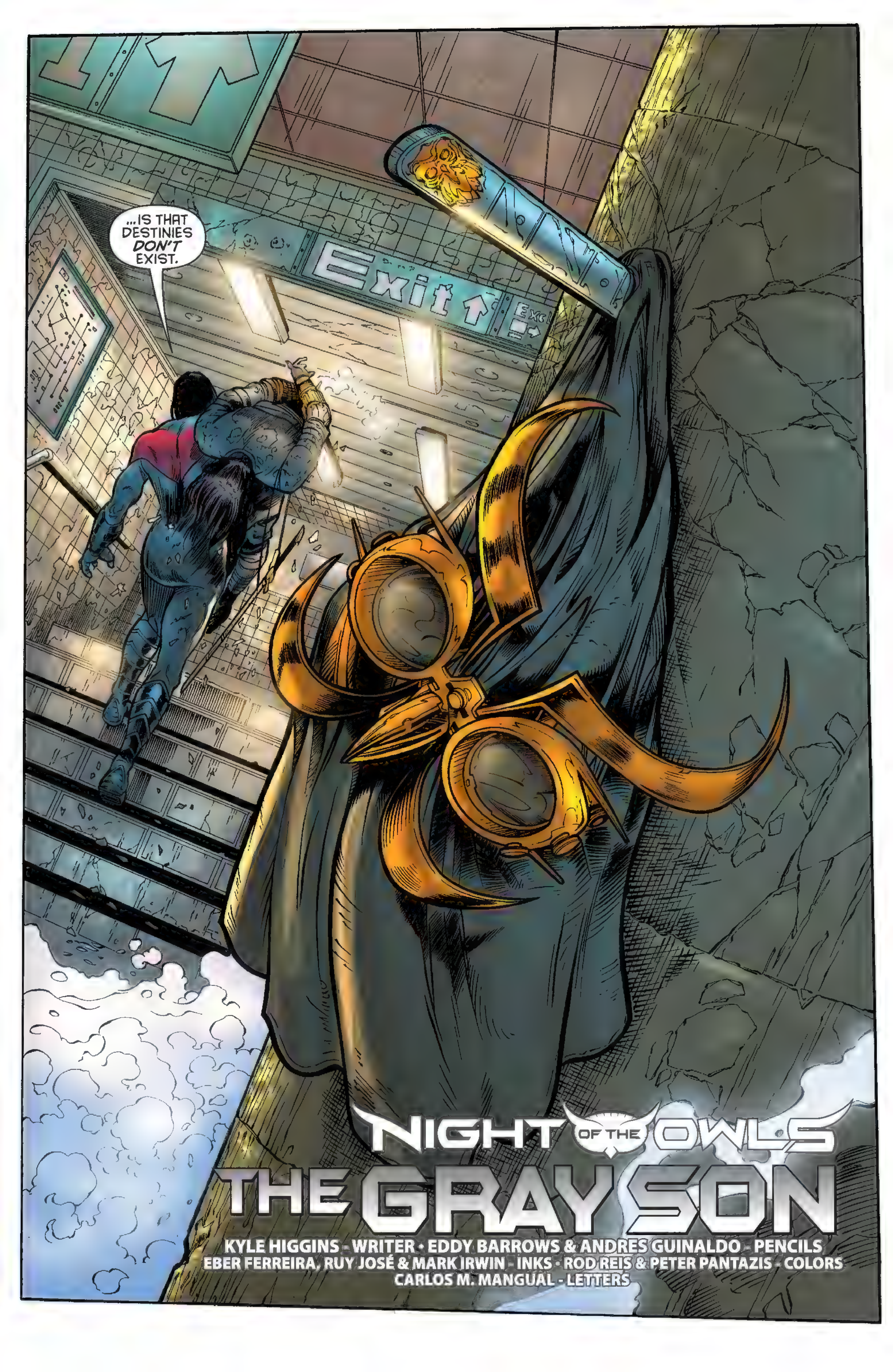
SO THEY STARTED PACKING THE LINES WITH LIQUID NITROGEN. WHICH IS WHY I BROUGHT YOU DOWN HERE.

↑ Exit

BECAUSE TALON'S DON'T LIKE THE COLD.





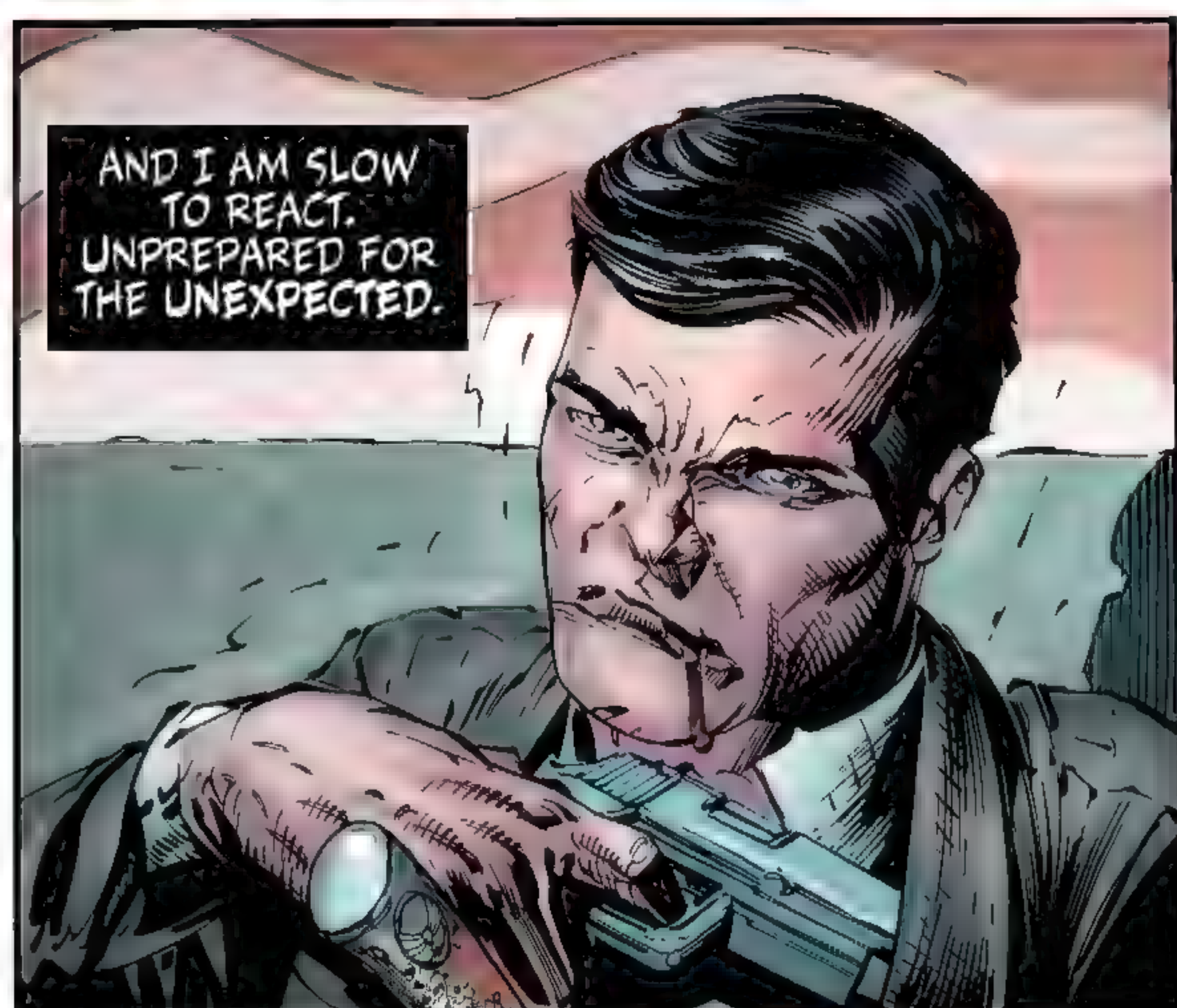
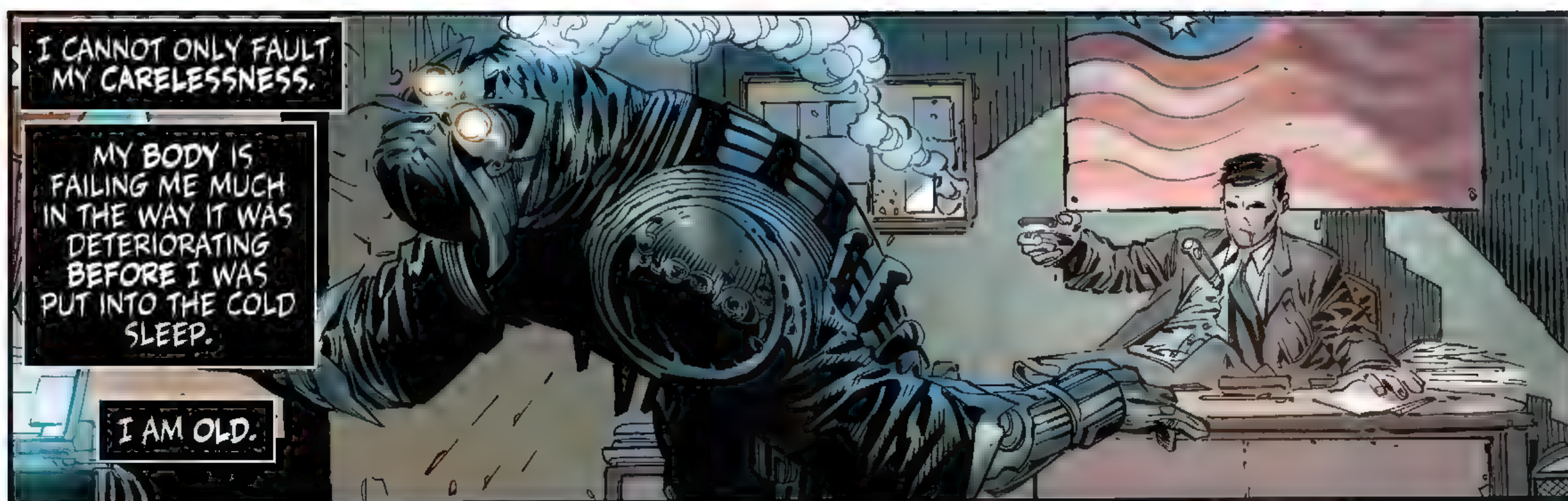


...IS THAT
DESTINIES
DON'T
EXIST.

NIGHT OF THE OWLS THE GRAY SON

KYLE HIGGINS - WRITER • EDDY BARROWS & ANDRES GUINALDO - PENCILS
EBER FERREIRA, RUY JOSÉ & MARK IRWIN - INKS • ROD REIS & PETER PANTAZIS - COLORS
CARLOS M. MANGUAL - LETTERS





NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 10:55 PM...

IT IS MY LAST
THOUGHT.

NIGHT OF THE OWLS
"I CAN NO LONGER
BE BROKEN"

JUDD WINICK
WRITER
INKS: RICHARD FRIEND

DAVID FINCH
PENCILLER
COLORS: SONIA OBACK LETTERS: STEVE WANDS

YEARS AGO...

I BEGAN AT
HALY'S CIRCUS.

YOU THINK
TOO MUCH, ALTON.
YOU DWELL TOO
LONG.

WITH THE
RINGMASTER.

HE RAN THE CIRCUS, AND TRAINED ME
AS OTHER RINGMASTERS HAD TRAINED
THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE ME.

YOU LIVE IN
FEAR.

I'M NOT SCARED.
I JUST--I JUST DON'T
WANT TO DO IT **RIGHT NOW!**
I WANT TO TRY AGAIN
TOMORROW!

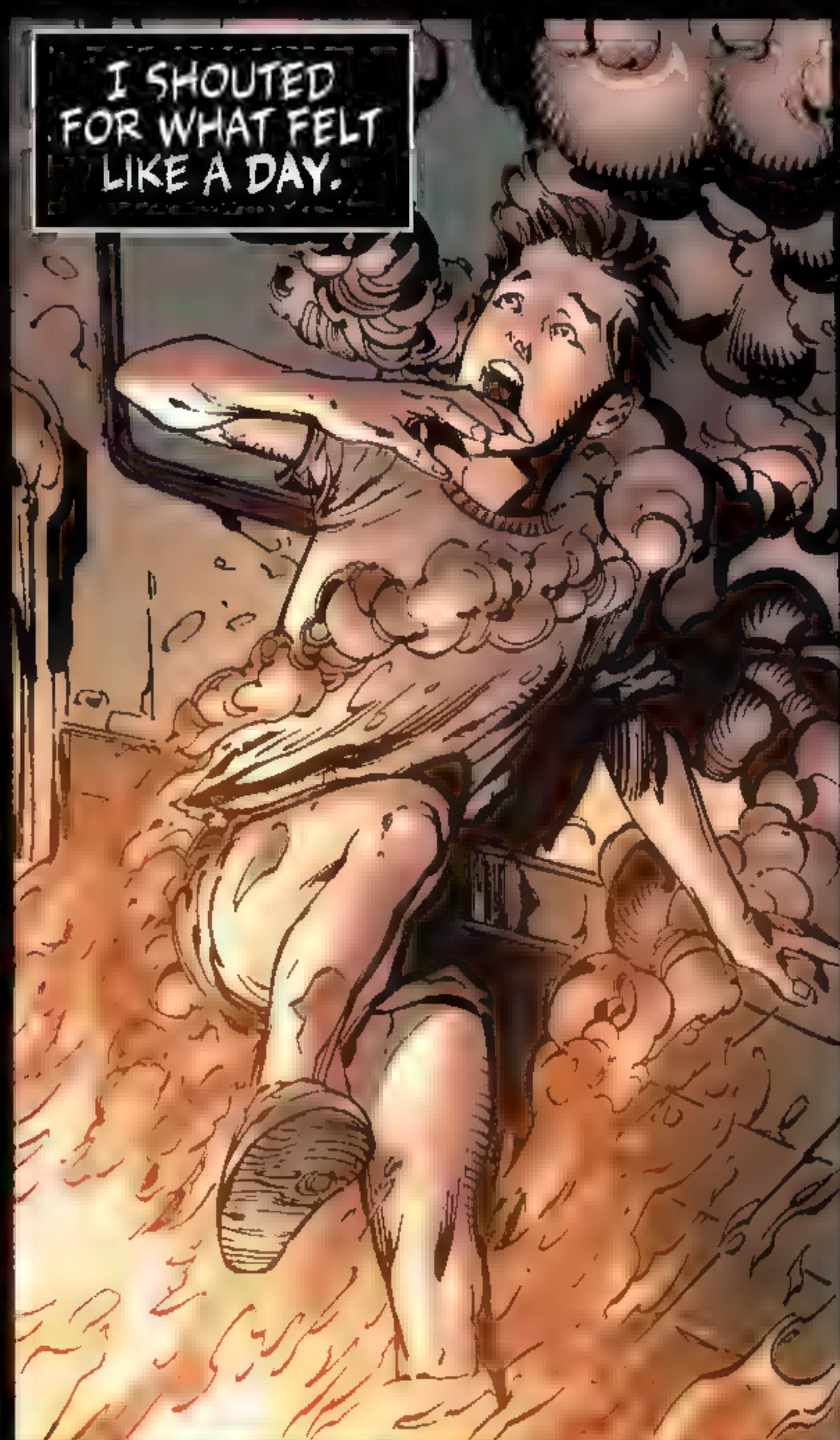
NO. THERE IS NO
WAITING FOR YOU!
YOU WILL NOT FEAR
ANYTHING!

I HAD BEEN
TUMBLING, HURLING
BLADES, AND
JUGGLING FIRE SINCE
I COULD WALK.

BUT THE HIGH WIRE
MADE ME NERVOUS.

YOU WILL
FEAR **NOTHING**
WHEN YOU KNOW
DEATH!

NOOOO!



TWENTY-SIX YEARS LATER...

GOTHAM CITY.

AND THE TALON IS
WHAT I BECAME.

I SERVED THE COURT OF
OWLS--THEY WHO HAVE
CONTROLLED THE CITY SINCE
BEFORE ITS FOUNDING.

I WAS A SILENT
WEAPON.

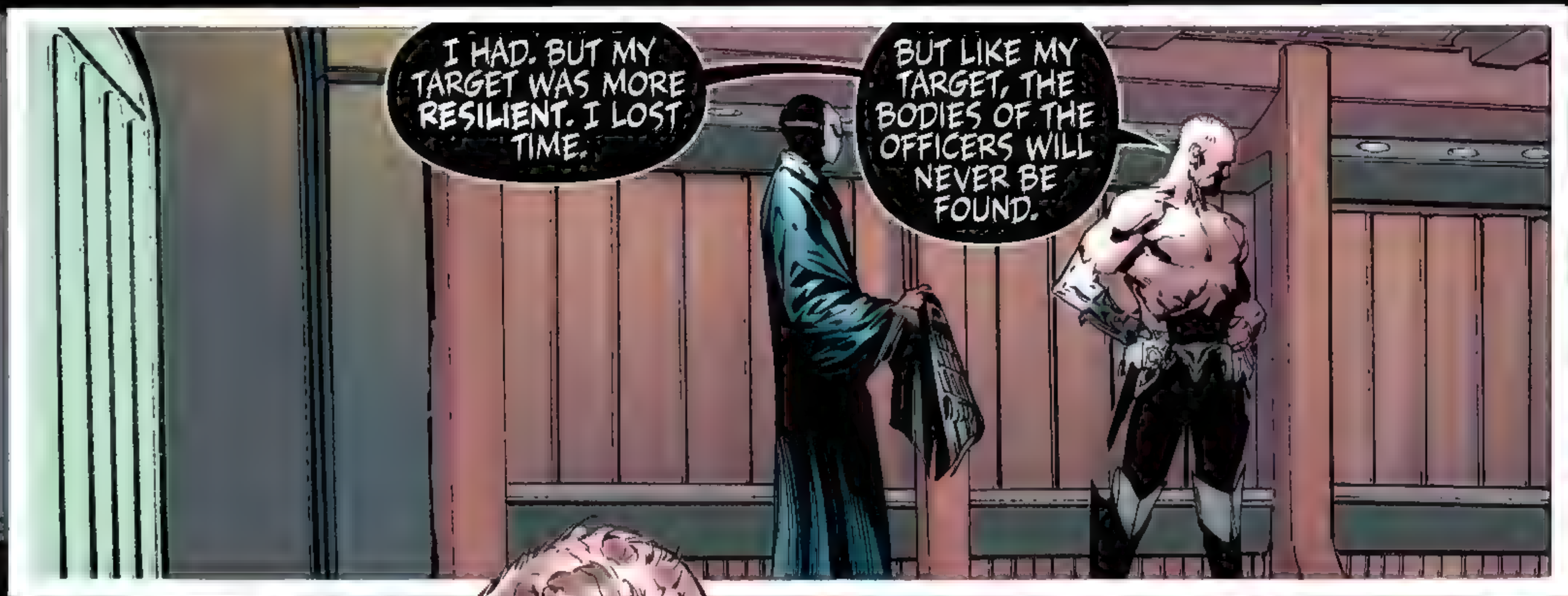
DEATH
ITSELF.

I HELD
THE MANTLE
LONGER THAN
MOST.

BUT MY SKILLS
BECAME DULL.

"THREE POLICE
OFFICERS? DIDN'T
YOU SWEEP THE
PERIMETER PRIOR
TO THE ATTACK?"





I HAD. BUT MY TARGET WAS MORE RESILIENT. I LOST TIME.

BUT LIKE MY TARGET, THE BODIES OF THE OFFICERS WILL NEVER BE FOUND.



YOU *DISPOSED* OF THEM?

STAGING THEIR DEATHS AS A CRIME SCENE KILLING WOULD HAVE BEEN *MORE PRUDENT*.

NOW THERE ARE MISSING *POLICE!* THERE WILL BE *MASSIVE* INQUIRY--A MEDIA FIELD DAY!

YOU... YOU ARE CORRECT. I WAS IN ERROR.

YOU HAVE BEEN IN ERROR TOO OFTEN OF LATE.

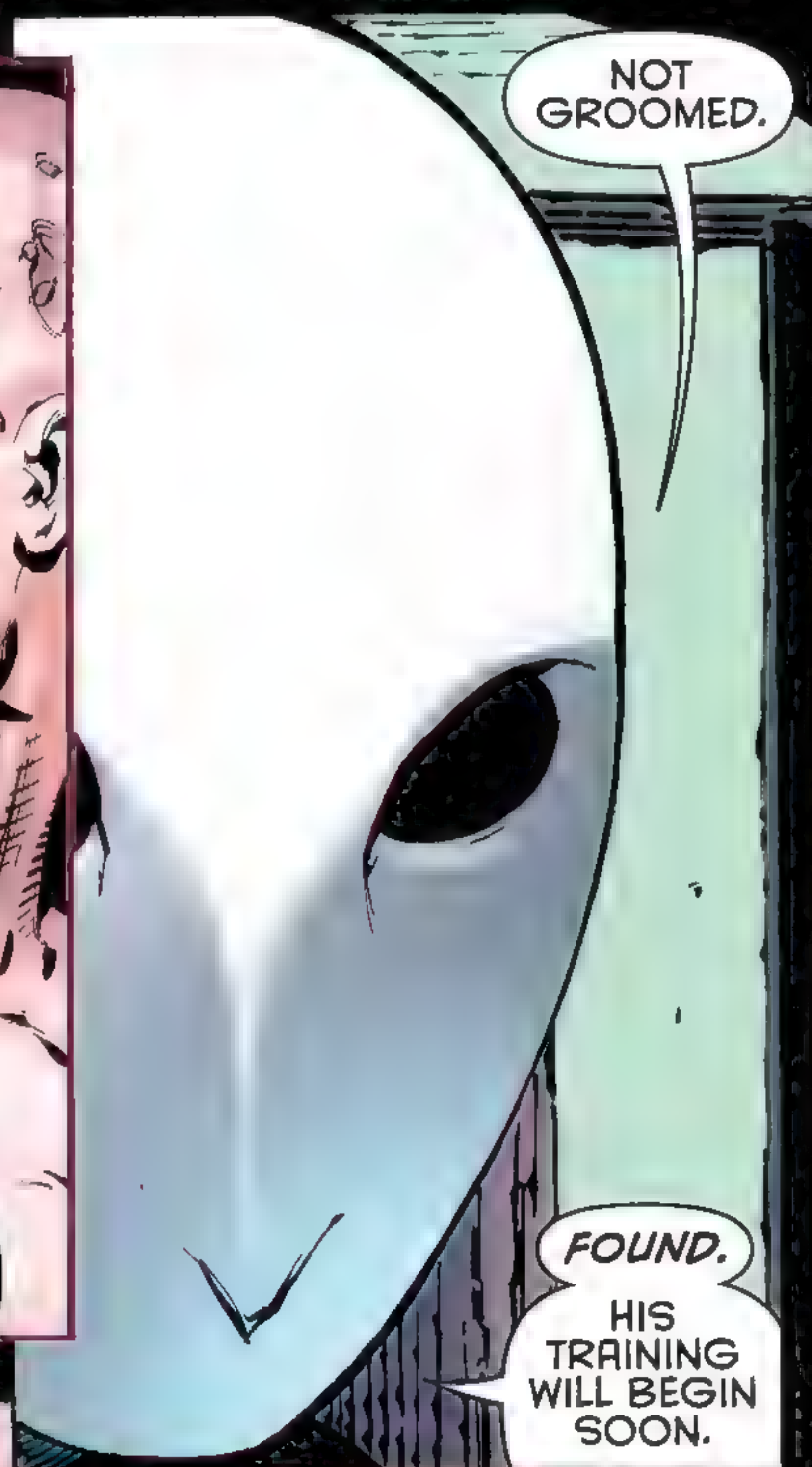




THERE HAS BEEN...TALK OF **RETIRING** YOU FROM YOUR DUTY.



I WAS NOT AWARE THAT A CANDIDATE WAS BEING GROOMED.



NOT GROOMED.

FOUND.
HIS TRAINING WILL BEGIN SOON.



YOUR TENURE MAY BE REACHING ITS **HORIZON**, CARVER...



"...UNLESS YOU PROVE YOURSELF **WORTHY.**"

THIS IS WHERE WE ARE ALL MADE. IT HAS BEEN THIS WAY SINCE THE BEGINNING.



I HAD A MISSION...BUT I
COULD NOT STOP MYSELF
FROM RETURNING TO MY
FIRST AND ONLY HOME.

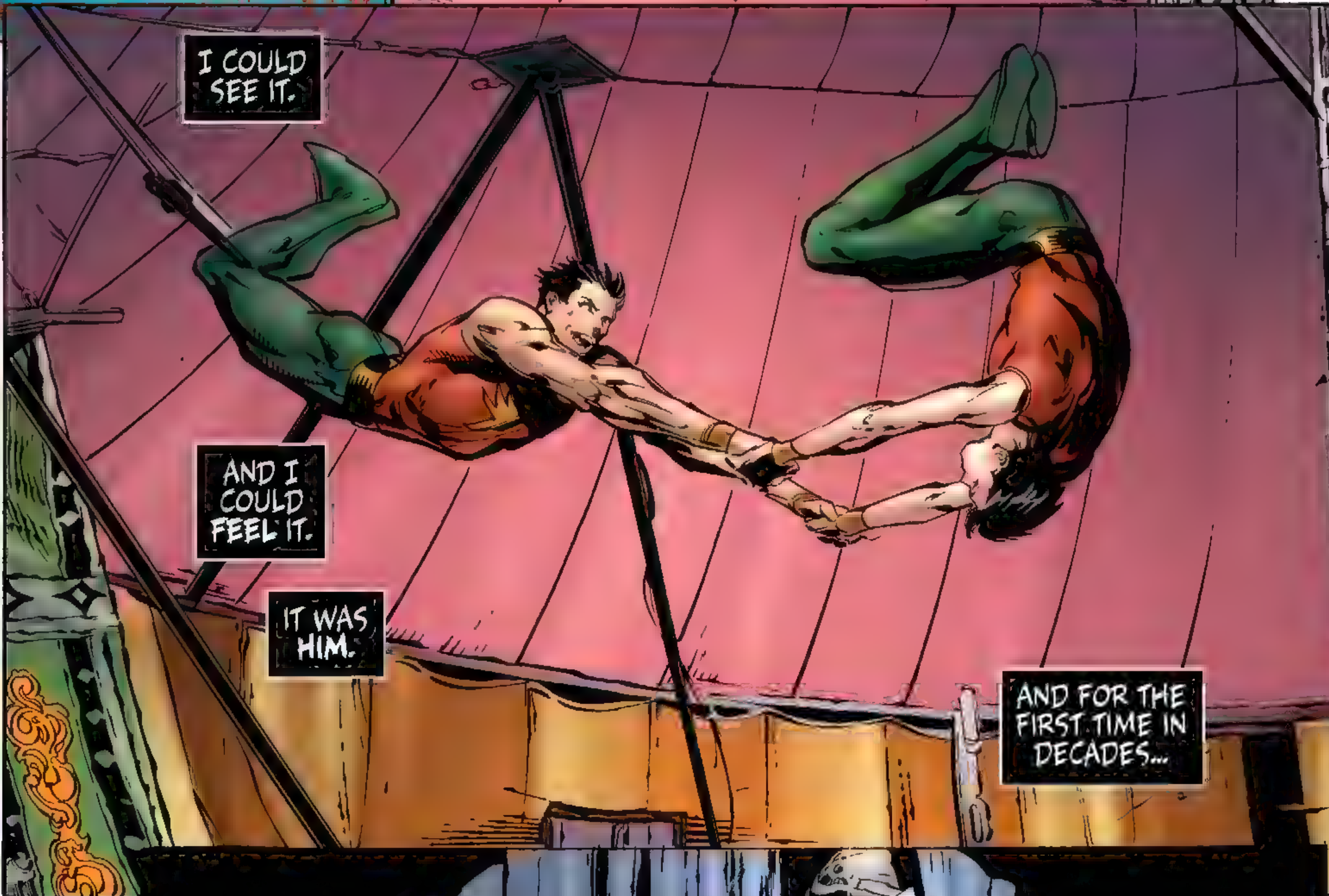
I NEEDED
TO SEE HIM.

THE ONE WHO
WOULD TAKE
MY PLACE.



NO ONE HAD TO TELL
ME WHO HE WAS.

THE FLYING GRAYSONS



I COULD
SEE IT.

AND I
COULD
FEEL IT.

IT WAS
HIM.

AND FOR THE
FIRST TIME IN
DECADES...

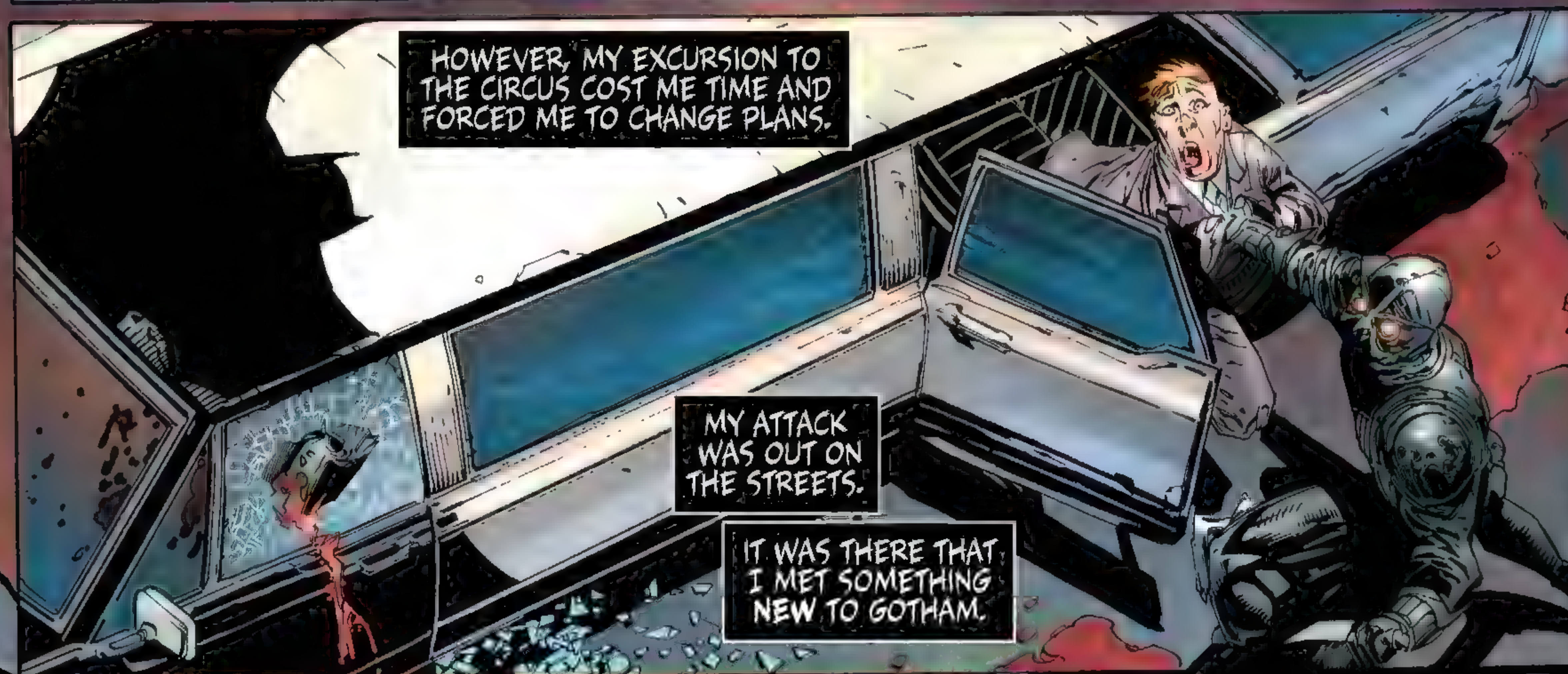


...I FELT
FEAR.



BUT I WAS A
TALON. AND I LIVED
WITHOUT FEAR.

AND I WAS TO PERFORM
WITHOUT FAILURE.



HOWEVER, MY EXCURSION TO
THE CIRCUS COST ME TIME AND
FORCED ME TO CHANGE PLANS.

MY ATTACK
WAS OUT ON
THE STREETS.

IT WAS THERE THAT
I MET SOMETHING
NEW TO GOTHAM.

AND FOR THE SECOND
TIME THAT NIGHT...



I FELT
AFRAID.

I HAD FAILED.

MY TARGET LIVED.

I HAD BEEN SEEN.

THE BATTLE WAS SHORT-LIVED. I DID NOT FIGHT FOR LONG. I FLED...

...FROM A GIANT BAT.

HIS TENURE HAS ENDED.

SLEEP CAME UPON ME QUICKLY...

...BUT NOT BEFORE THE COLD RAN THROUGH ME LIKE DEATH.

THEN DARKNESS CAME.

BUT IT WAS NOT A RESTFUL SLUMBER.

I DREAMED...

...AND SAW THE SOURCE OF MY FEAR

THE SOURCE OF MY FINAL FAILURE.

THEN, YEARS
LATER...

...THE SLEEP
ENDED.

AND NOT JUST
FOR ME...

...BUT FOR ALL
OF THE TALONS,
ALL WHO BORE
THE MANTLE.

THE COURT IS NOW
STRIKING GOTHAM
WITH ITS MIGHTY
CLAWS IN ONE
NIGHT. ALL OF ITS
ENEMIES. ALL OF
ITS IMPEDIMENTS.

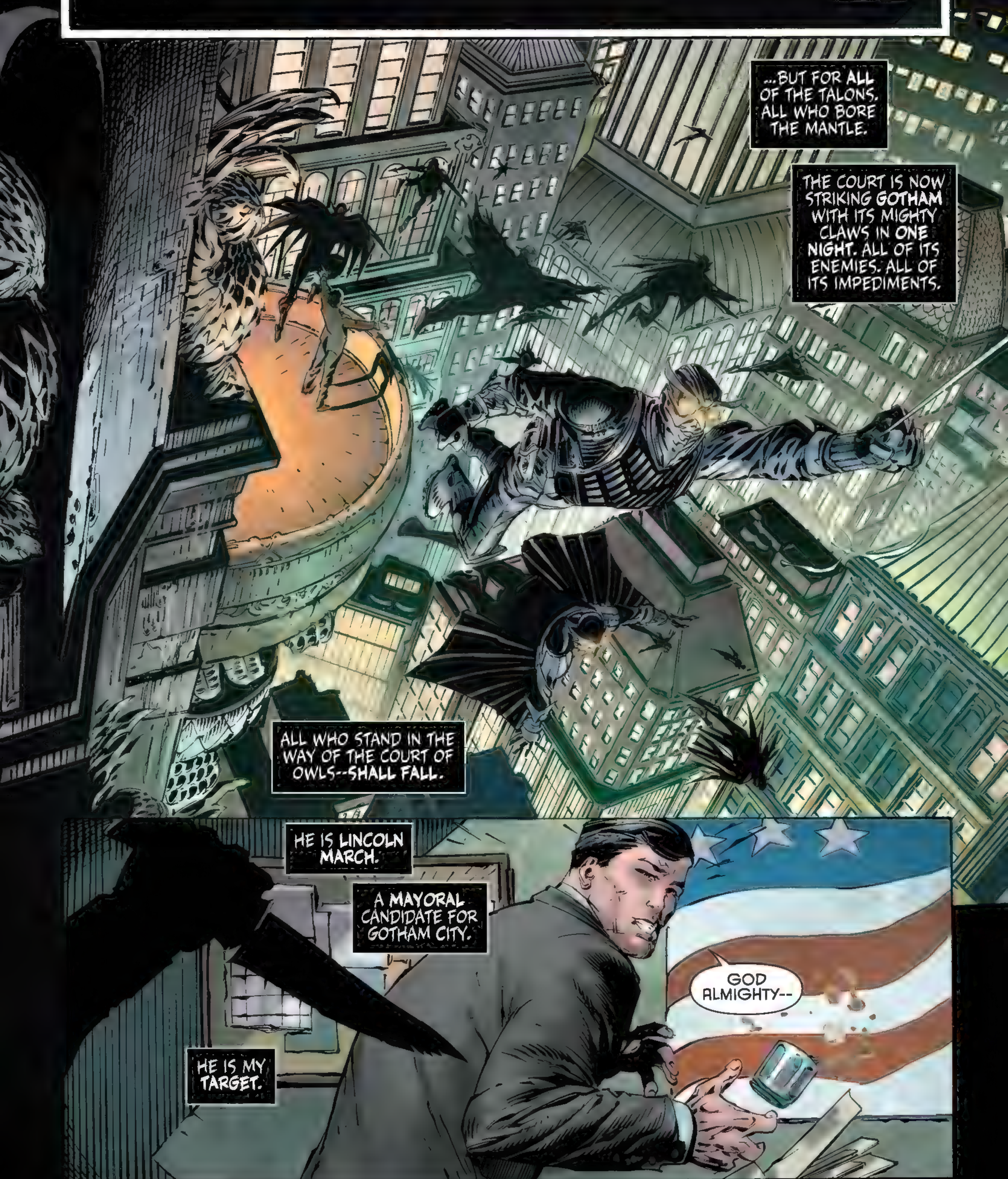
ALL WHO STAND IN THE
WAY OF THE COURT OF
OWLS--SHALL FALL.

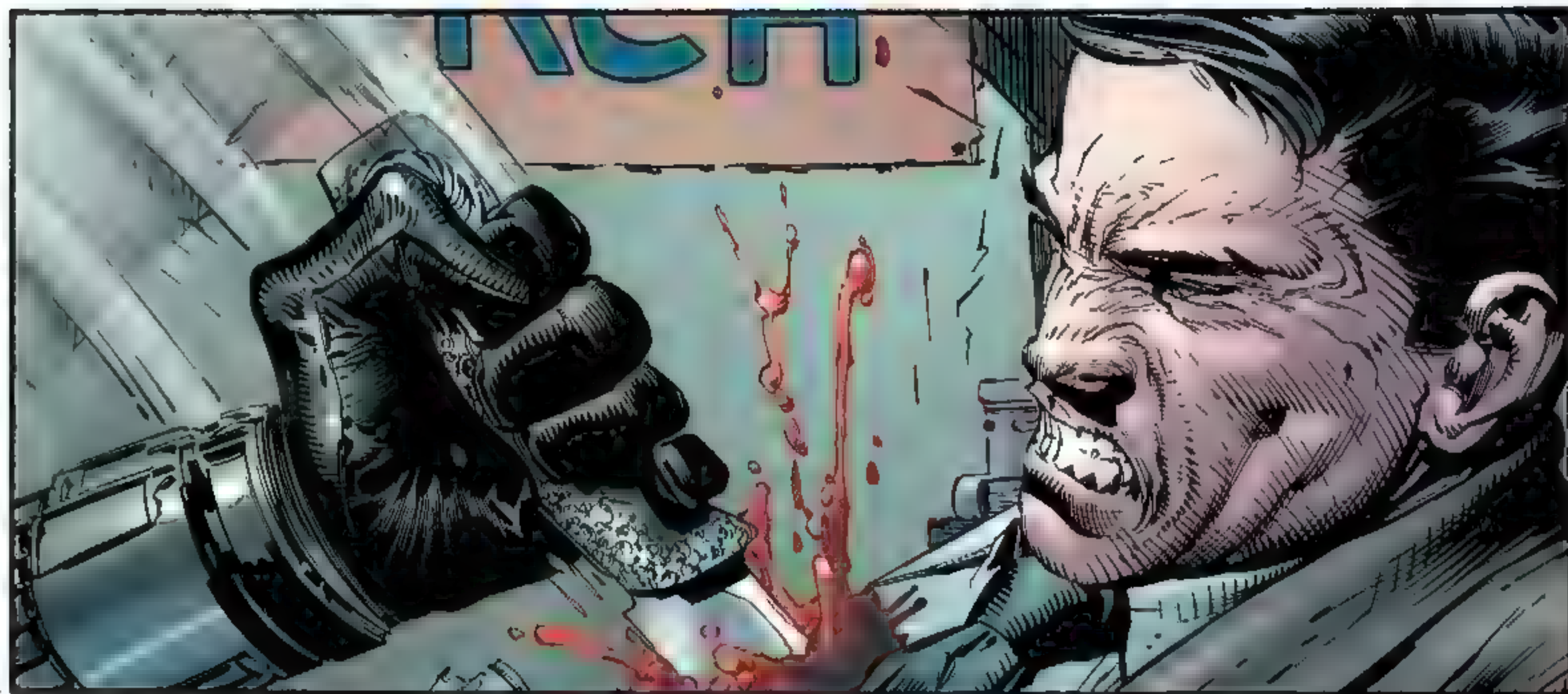
HE IS LINCOLN
MARCH.

A MAYORAL
CANDIDATE FOR
GOTHAM CITY.

HE IS MY
TARGET.

GOD
ALMIGHTY--





I HAVE NO IDEA WHY HE IS TO BE KILLED. IT IS NEVER A TALON'S PLACE TO ASK. HE IS JUST ANOTHER DROP ADDED TO THE GALLONS OF BLOOD I HAVE SPILLED.

IT IS OVER. ALL THAT YOU WERE. ALL THAT YOU WILL BE. IT IS DONE.

D-DAMN YOU--



BUT MY YEARS--MY LONG NIGHTS--HAVE DULLED MY BLADES.



I AM WEAK.

AND MY PAST FAILURES FALL UPON ME LIKE SHADOWS.



THE COURT TOLD US THAT WE
HAVE BEEN MADE STRONGER.

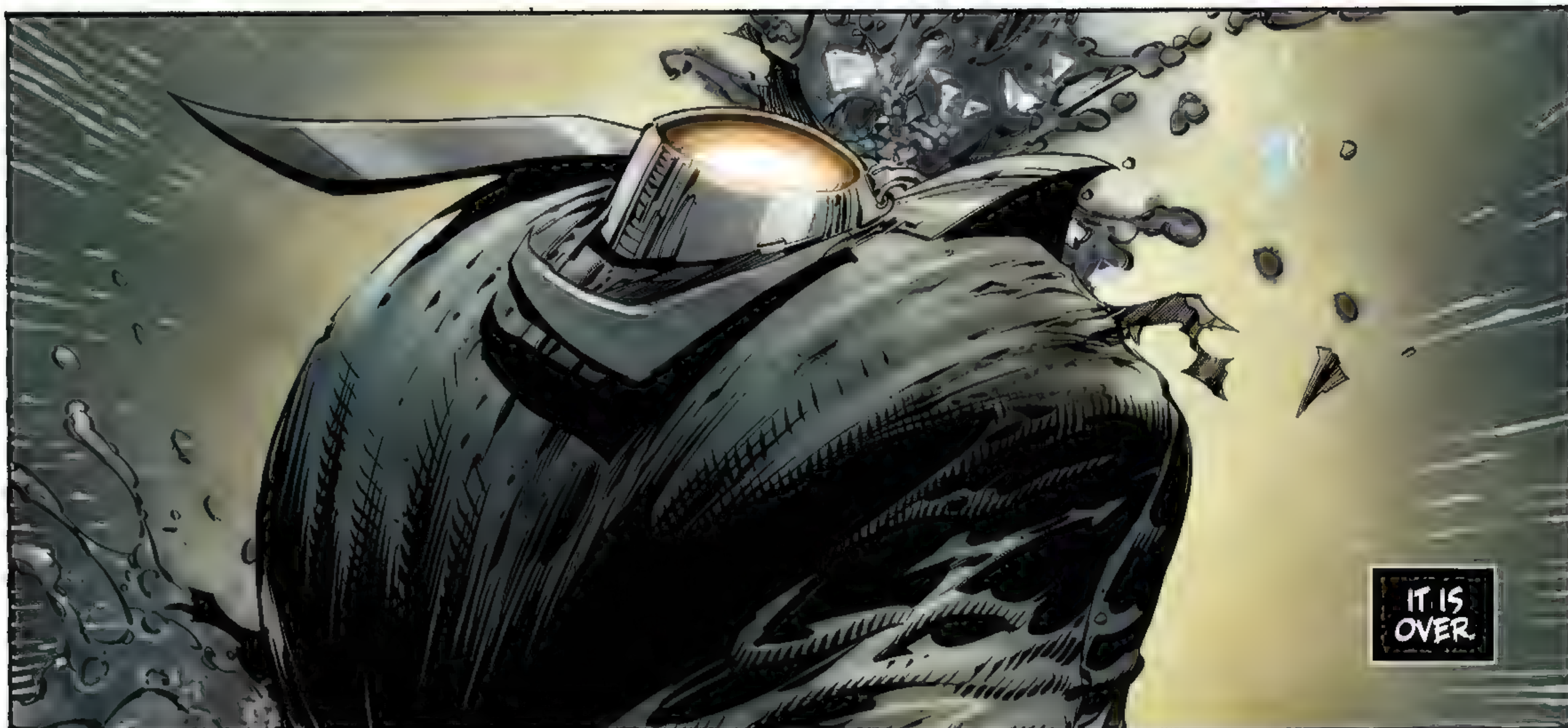
BUT STRENGTH IS
NOT WHAT I FEEL.

NO. IN MY
LAST
MOMENTS...

...I FEEL
THE FEAR.

I SEE THE
THING AGAIN.

MY
NIGHTMARE
IS REAL
ONCE MORE.



IT IS
OVER.

NOTHINGNESS
COMES.

AND FOR THE
SMALLEST
ETERNITY...

...THERE IS
PEACE.



BUT I
RETURN...

...AND SEE WHAT HAS
HAUNTED ME. WHAT
HAS DRIVEN ME HERE.



IT IS NOT
A THING.

IT IS A
MAN.

I CAN KILL
A MAN.

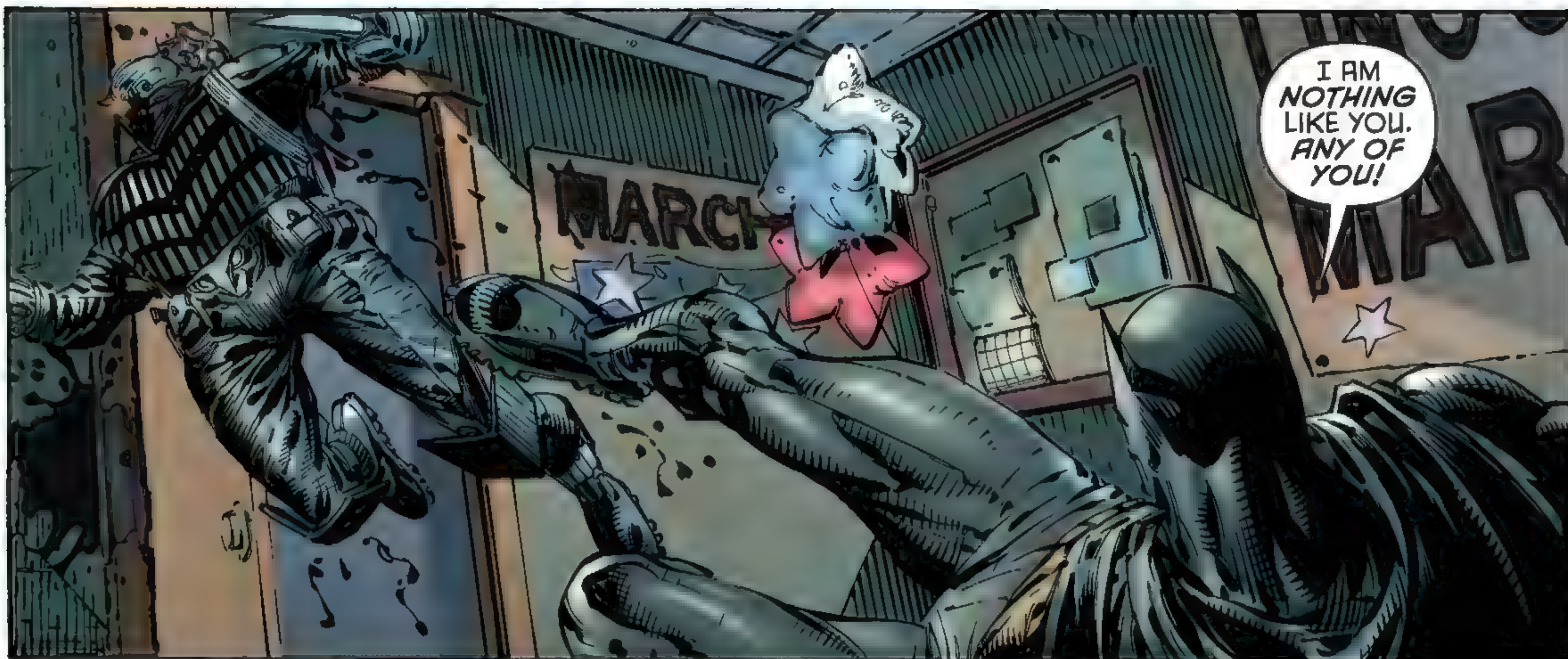


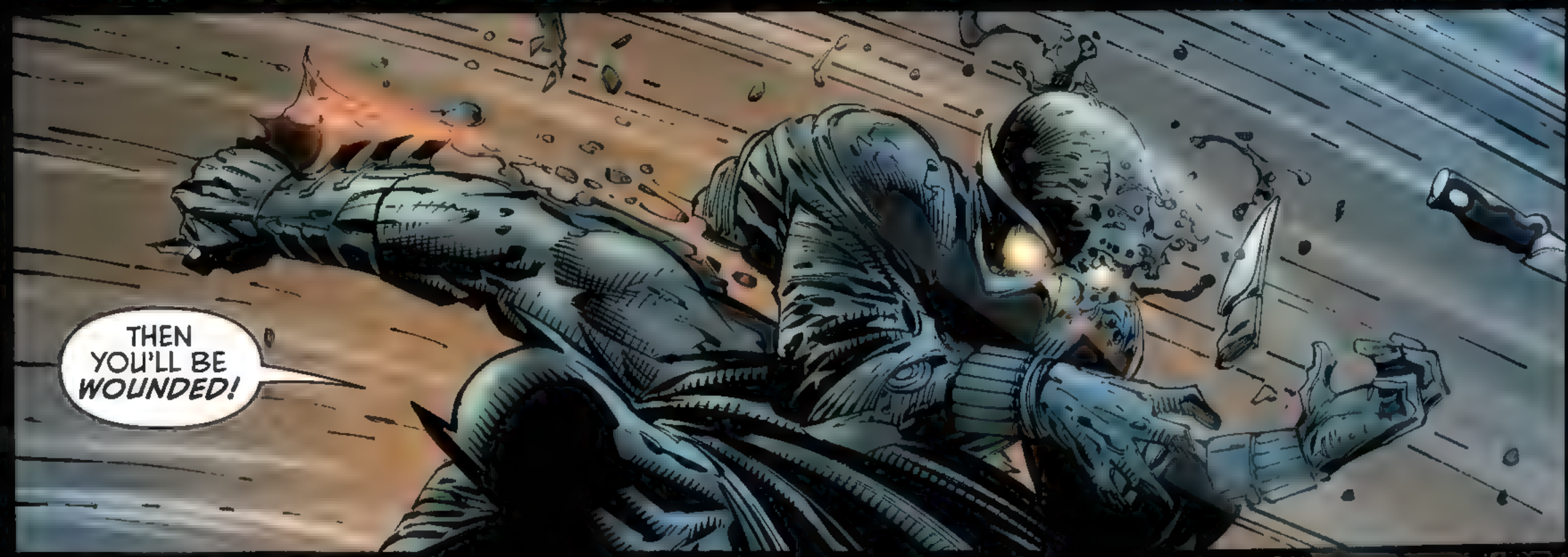
I FEEL
THE COLD
TAKE ME.

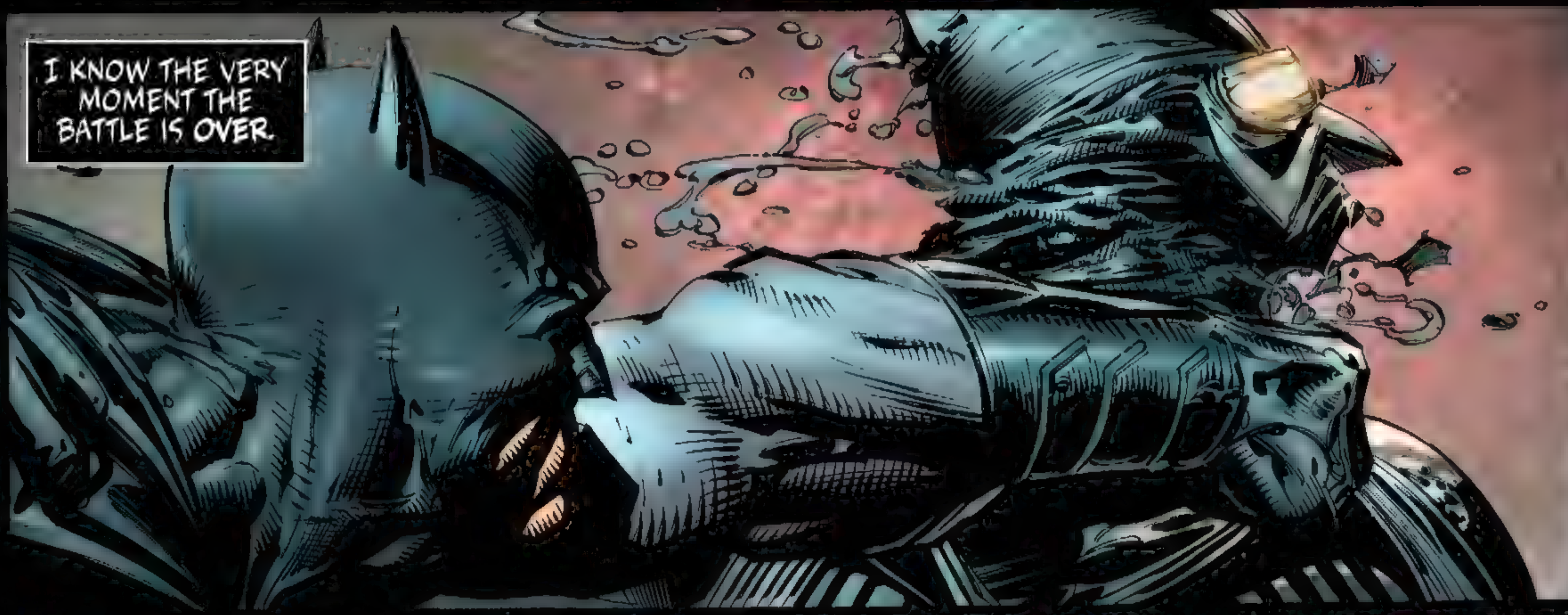
AND I
WELCOME IT.



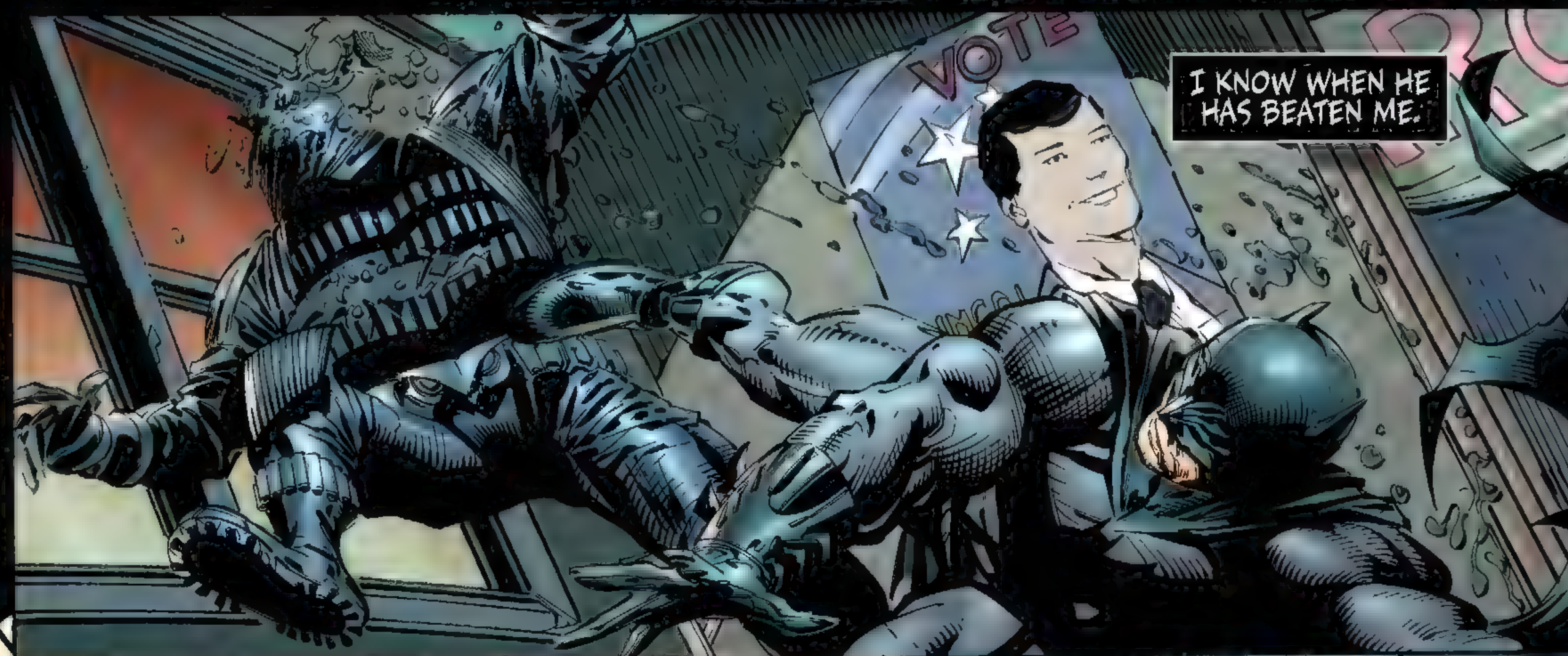
YOU ARE
JUST LIKE ME!
A SACK OF FLESH
AND WATER
ENCASED IN
METAL!







I KNOW THE VERY
MOMENT THE
BATTLE IS OVER.



I KNOW WHEN HE
HAS BEATEN ME.



AND I LET HIS
VICTORY CRASH
OVER ME.

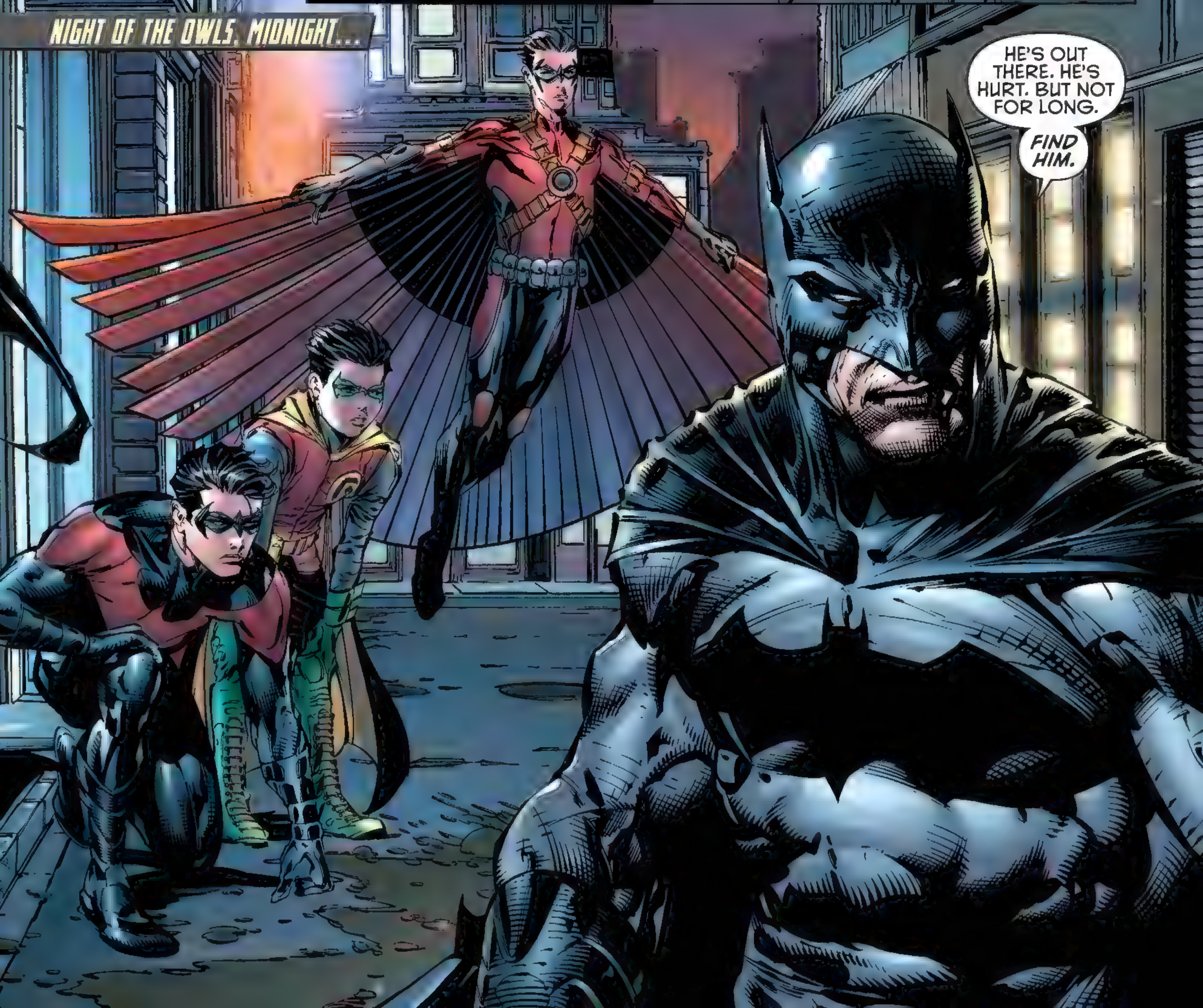


THIS FIGHT
IS OVER...



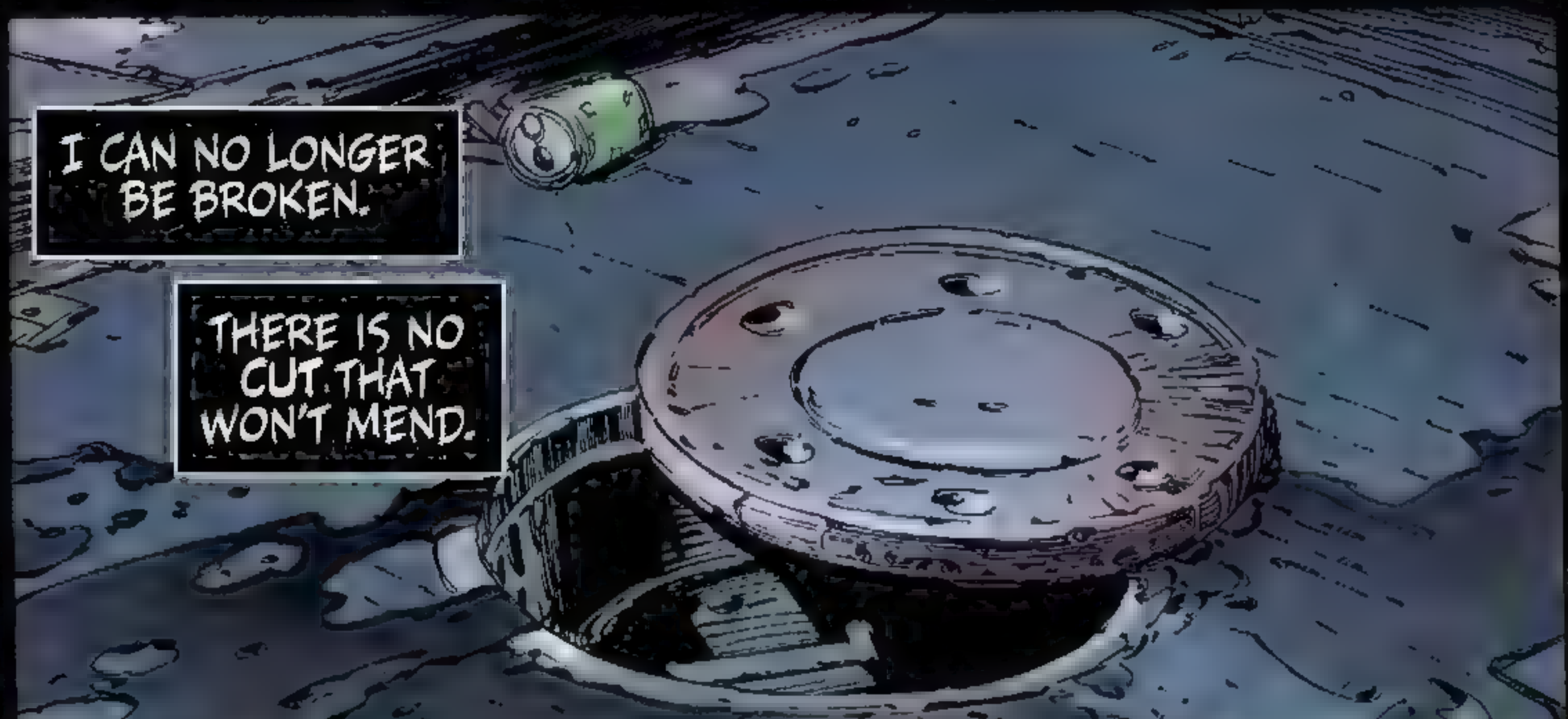
...BUT NOT
THE WAR.

NIGHT OF THE OWLS. MIDNIGHT...



HE'S OUT
THERE. HE'S
HURT. BUT NOT
FOR LONG.

FIND
HIM.



I CAN NO LONGER
BE BROKEN.

THERE IS NO
CUT THAT
WON'T MEND.



TONIGHT I
AWOKE. TWICE.

ONCE FROM A DARK SLEEP
RIFE WITH DESPAIR.

AND THE
OTHER--WAKING
FROM DEATH.

SOMETHING DIED.
SOMETHING WAS
BORN.



I FEEL
COLD.

I HAVE
NO FEAR...



LOWELL, NEBRASKA

OVER THIRTY YEARS AGO...

NEARLY SEALED

FIRST SNOW

SLOW
DOWN!

SCOTT SNYDER AND JAMES TYNION IV
WRITERS

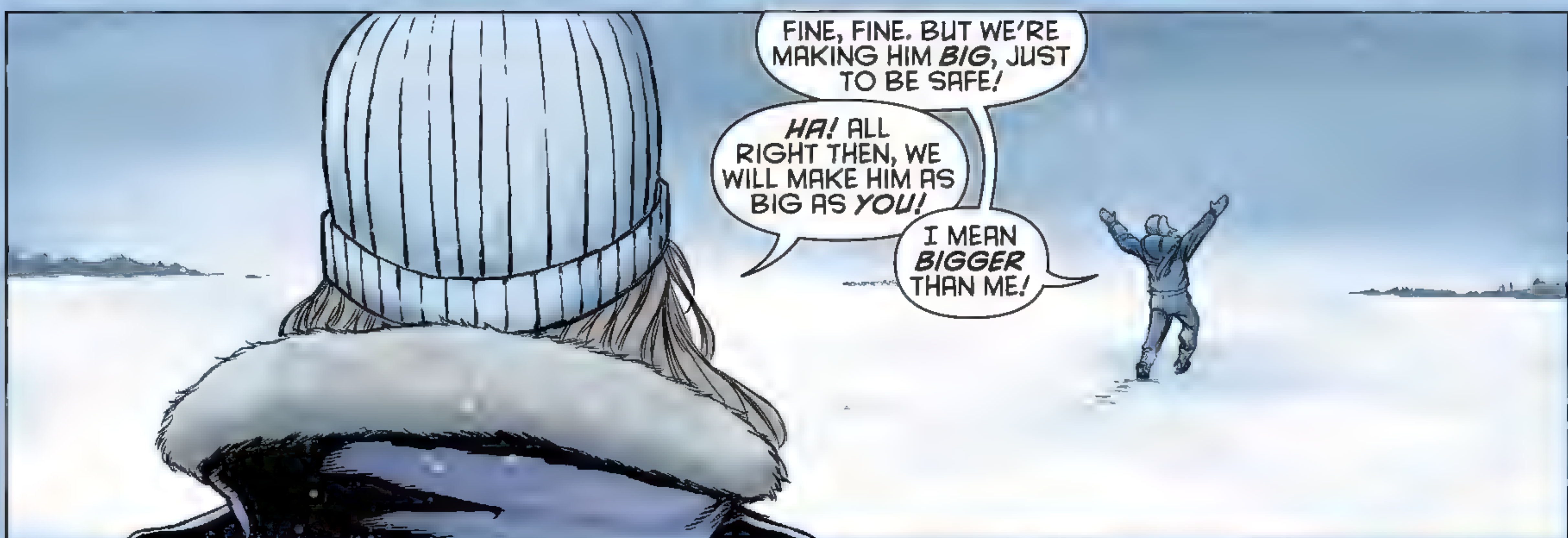
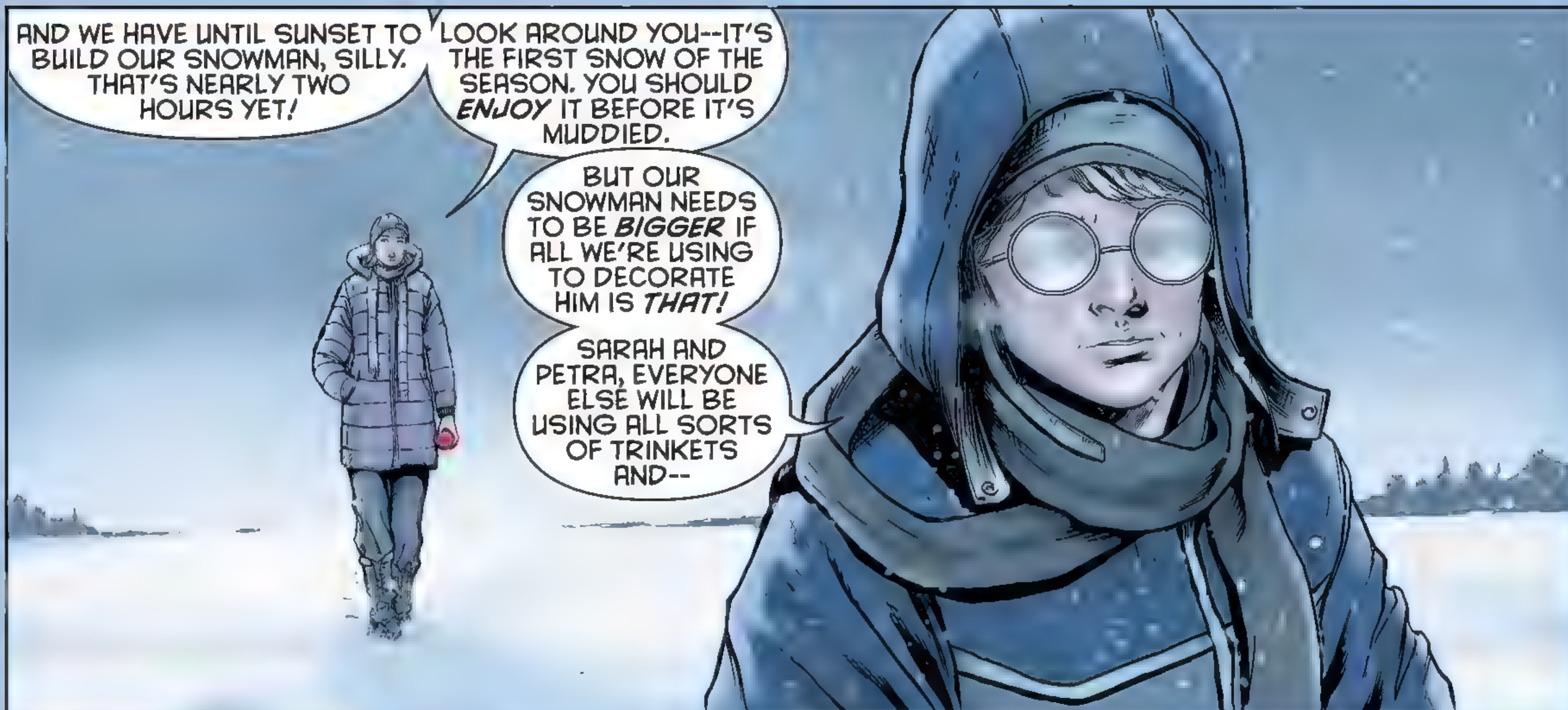
JASON FABOK
ART & COVER

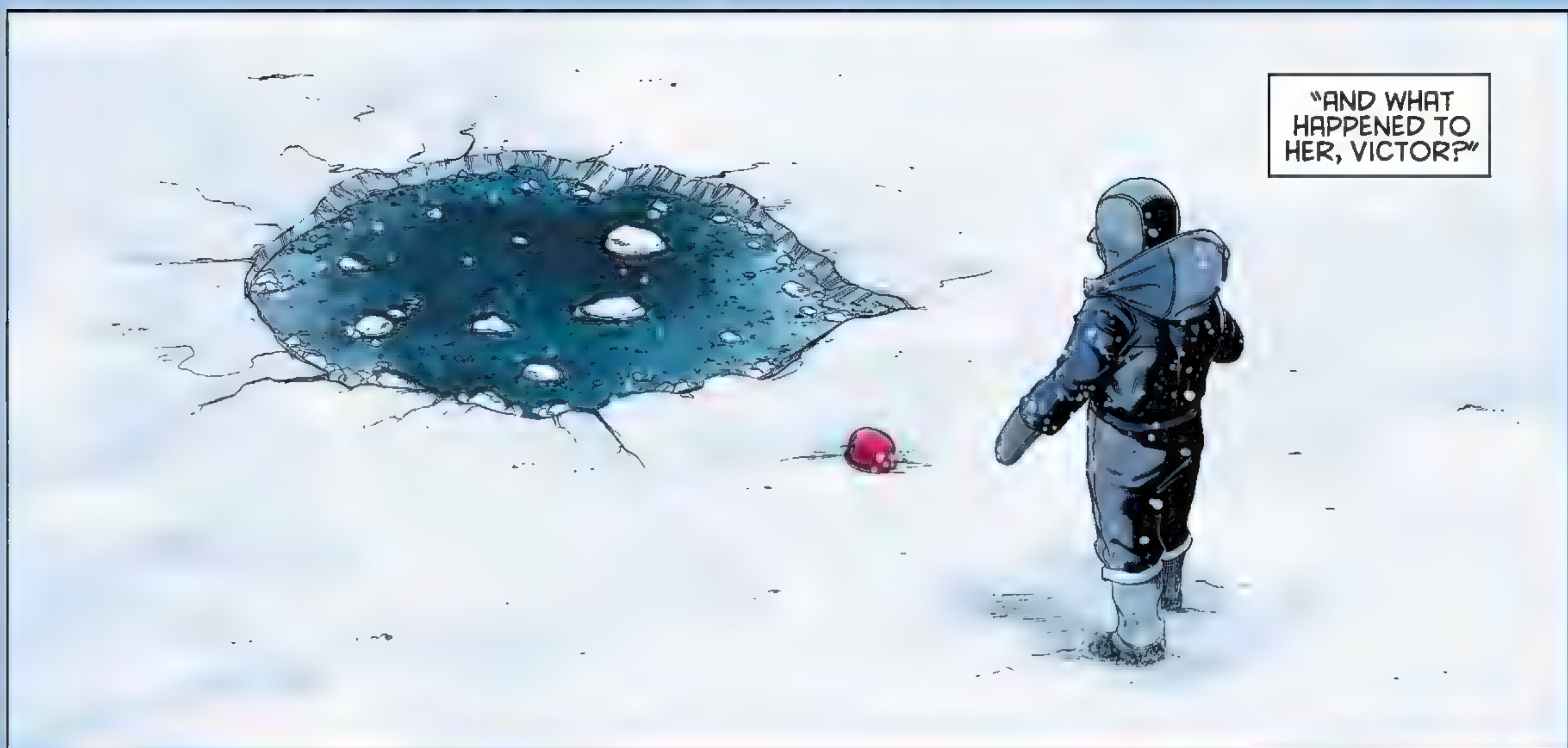
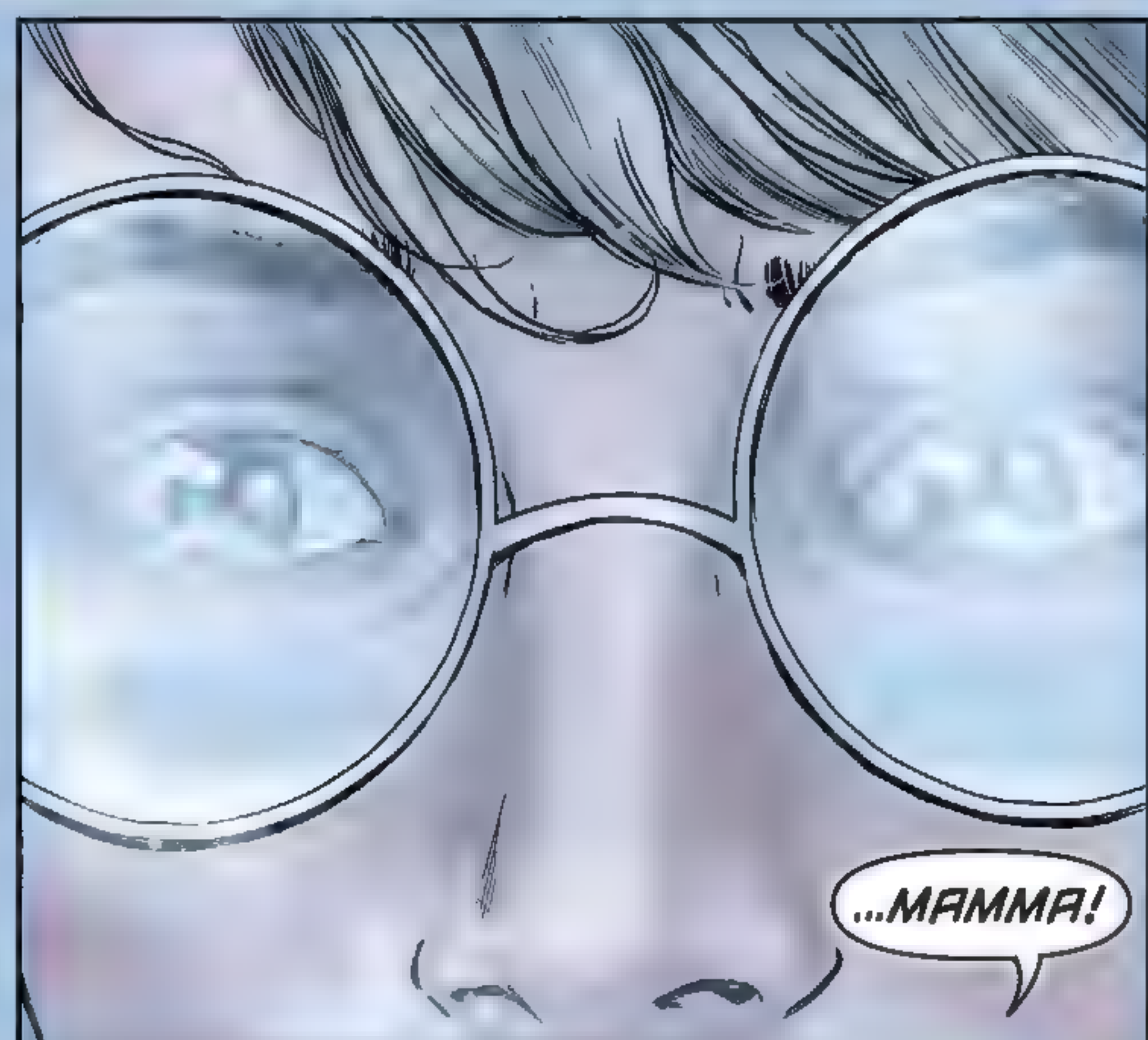
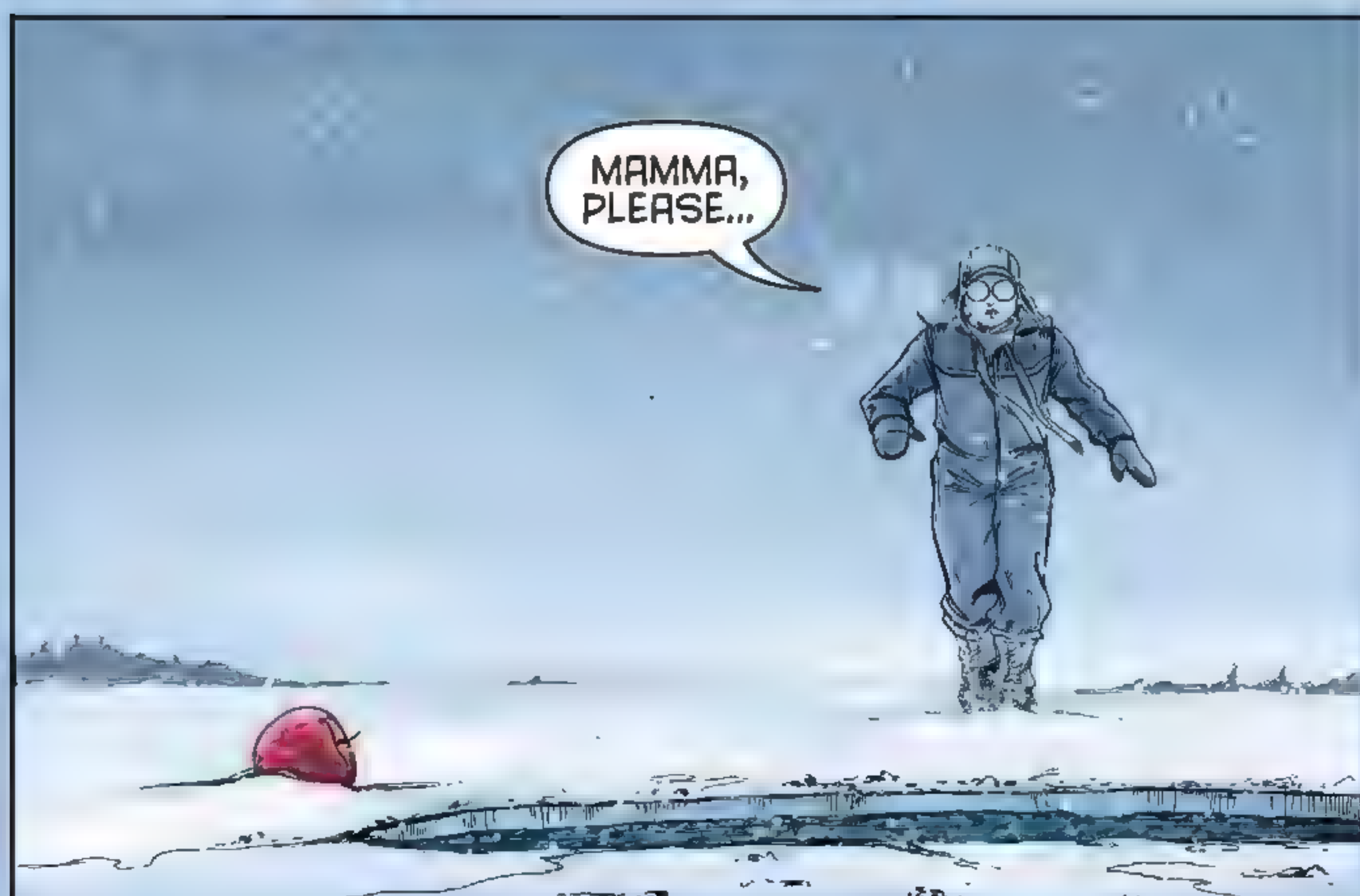
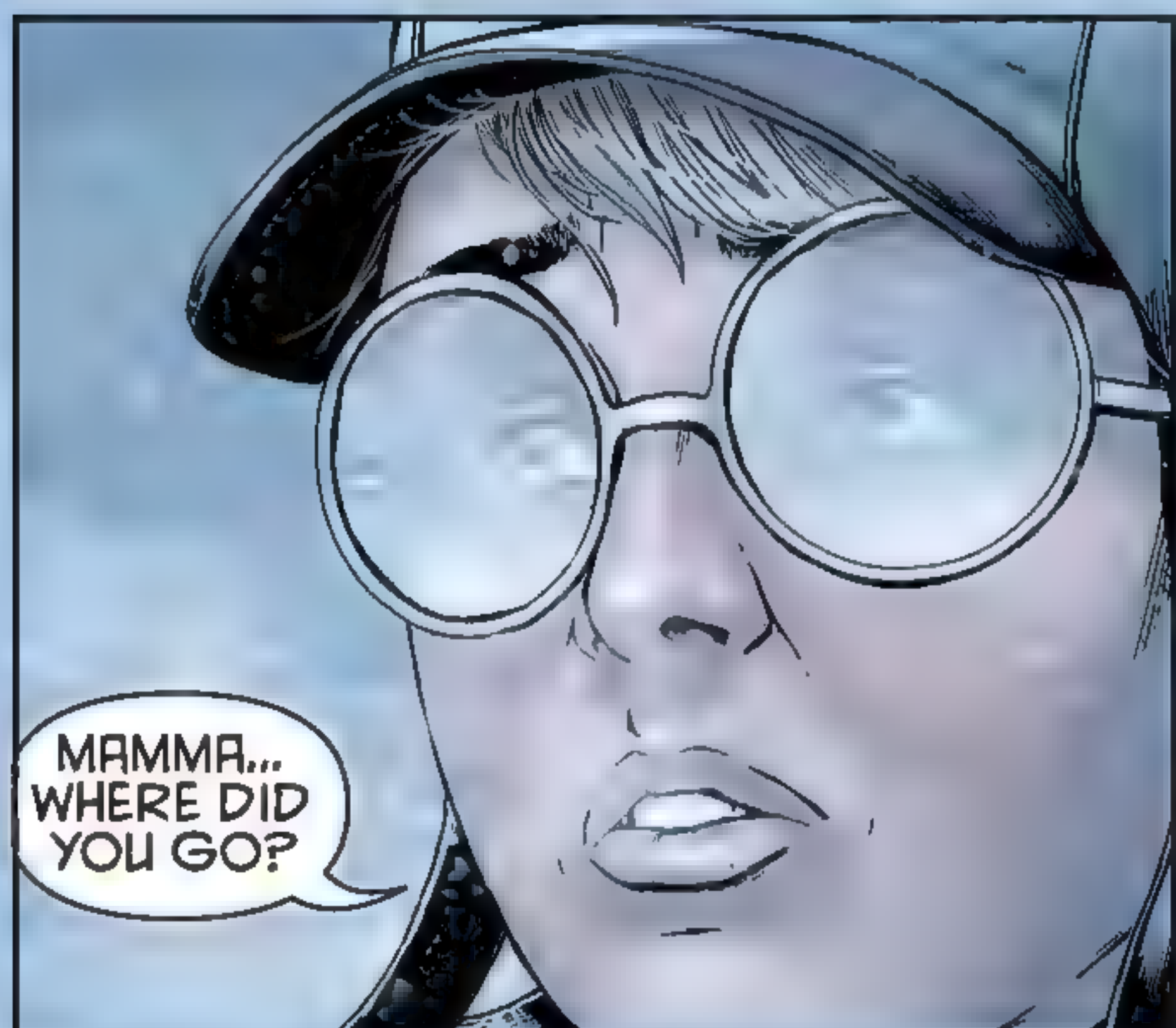
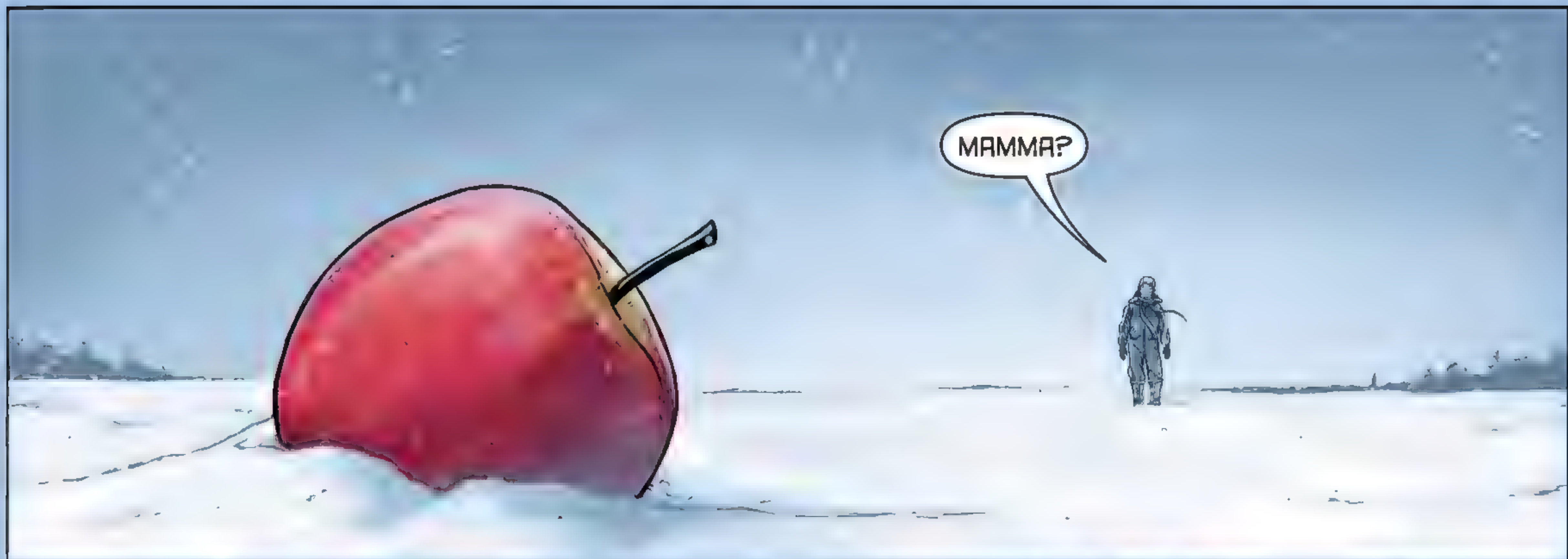
PETER STEIGERWALD
COLORS

SAL CIPRIANO
LETTERS

VICTOR,
THERE'S NO
RUSH! THE
SNOW'S NOT
GOING
ANYWHERE!

BUT THE
COMPETITION
STARTED AN
HOUR AGO,
MAMMA!







VICTOR?



THE ICE
PRESERVED
HER UNTIL HELP
ARRIVED.



PRESERVED HER
LIKE IT NOW
PRESERVES
NORA?

DO NOT
SPEAK OF MY
NORA.

LOOK, VICTOR.
YOU SAY THESE "OWLS"
TRICKED YOU, STOLE YOUR
FORMULA TO BRING THEIR
SOLDIERS TO LIFE AND THEN
TRIED TO *KILL YOU*. BUT CAN'T
YOU SEE WHAT *REALLY*
HAPPENED?

YOU WERE *ASKED*
TO BRING THEM TO LIFE--
MAKE THE COLD *WARM*
AGAIN--DON'T YOU THINK IT
WAS YOUR FEELINGS FOR
NORA THAT LED YOU TO
SET THIS TRAP FOR
YOURSELF?

I DO
NOT WISH TO
PURSUE THIS LINE
OF QUESTIONING
ANY FURTHER.

ALL RIGHT, VICTOR...
WHAT DO YOU WANT
TO TALK ABOUT?

TIME.

I'M
SORRY?

WHAT *TIME* IS IT,
DR. KEARNEY?

A FEW
MINUTES PAST
MIDNIGHT. WHY
DO YOU
ASK?

I'M GOING
TO REQUIRE YOUR
CRAYON.

VICTOR... YOU KNOW THE
HOSPITAL HAD IT MADE
SPECIALLY, WITH
ALCOHOLIC WAX.

YOU CAN'T
FREEZE IT...
CAN'T USE IT AS
A WEAPON OR
TOOL... SO WHAT
USE COULD YOU
POSSIBLY HAVE
FOR IT?



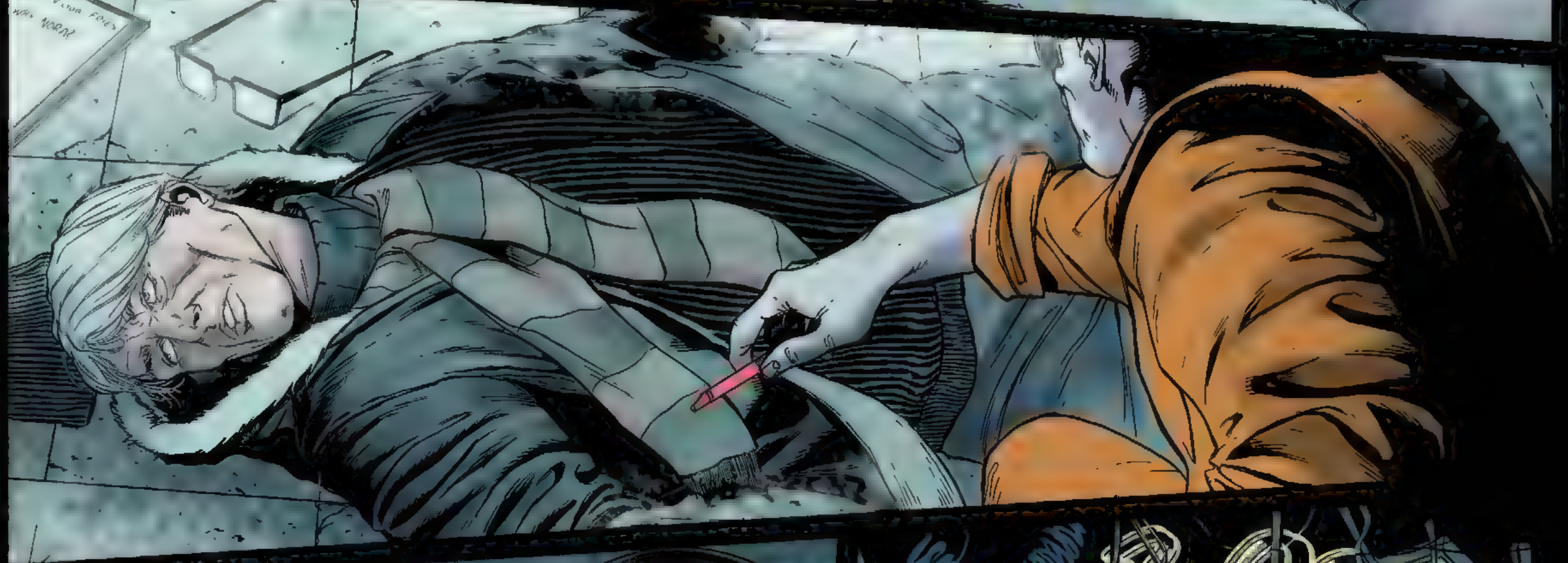
WIRE COATING.
NOW I WILL *HAVE*
IT FROM YOU.

YOU HURT ME,
VICTOR, THEY'LL
TURN THIS ROOM
INTO A SAUNA SO
FAST, YOUR--

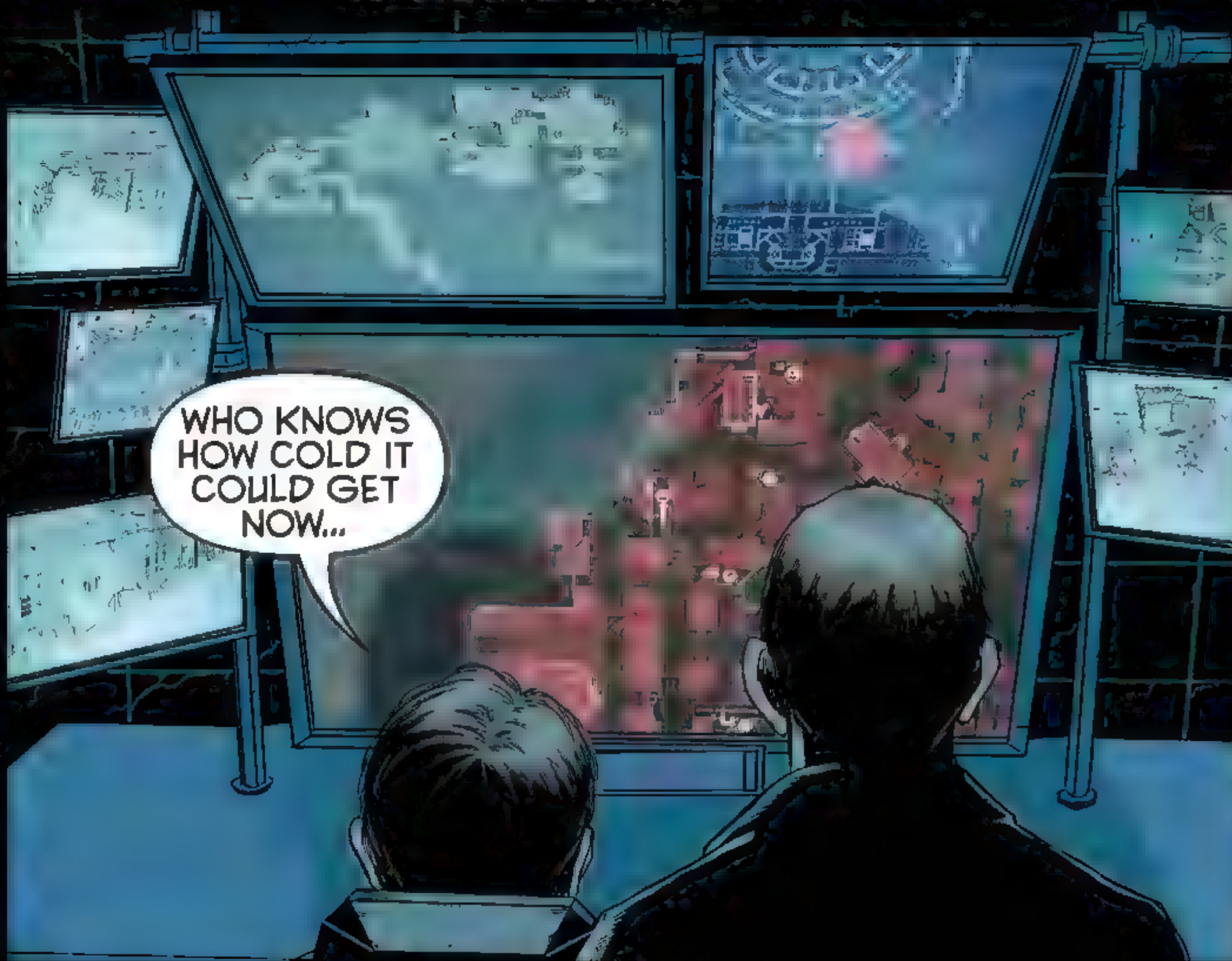
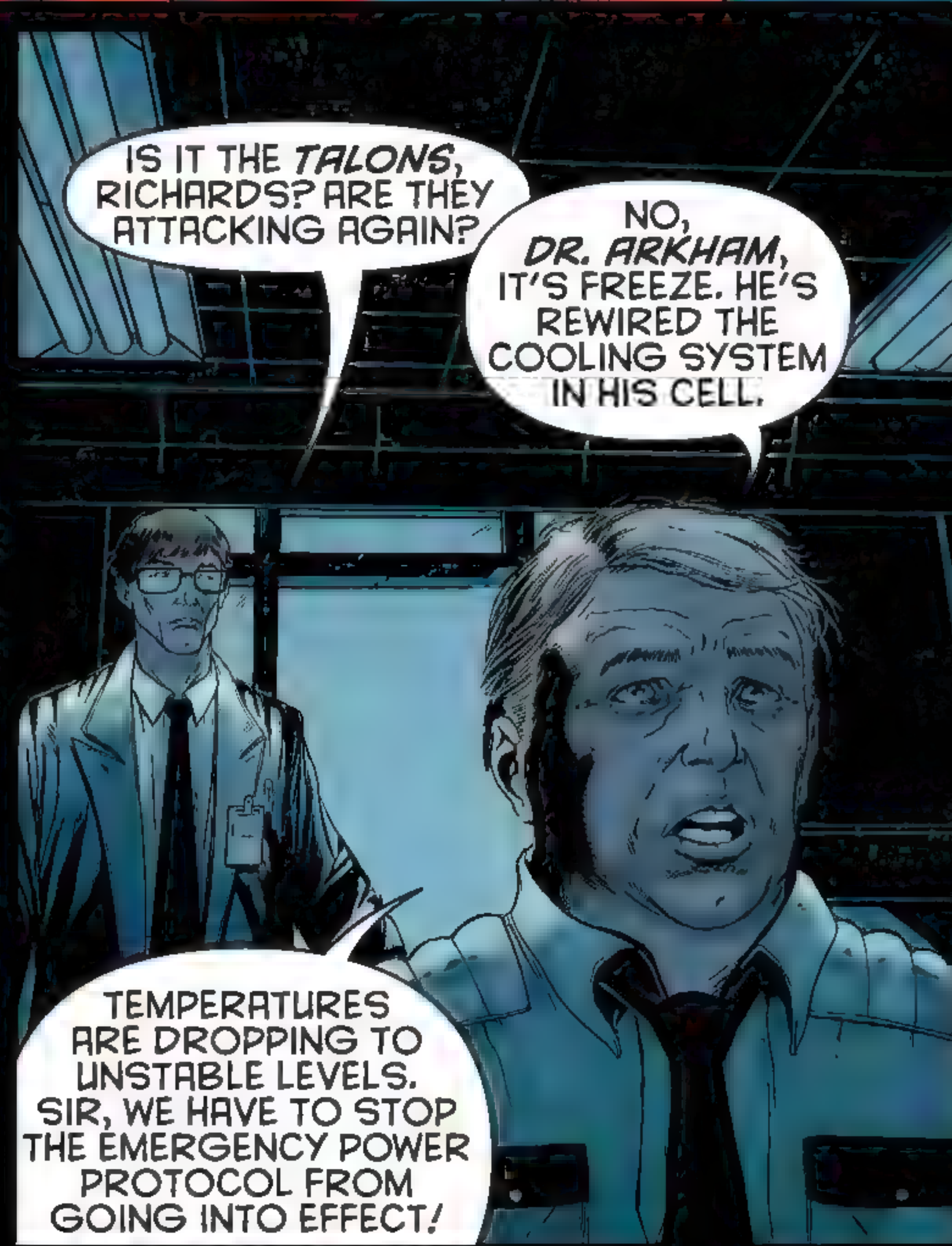


FORGIVE ME,
DOCTOR, BUT
THAT WAS NOT
A REQUEST.

KRAK



WIRRRR







WE
KNOW YOU'RE
THERE, FREEZE!

COME
AROUND THE
CORNER WITH YOUR
HANDS ABOVE
YOUR HEAD!



MY *TOES!*
CAN'T FEEL
MY--

NNNEED FIRE.
YES. YES.
FIIRE--

FREEZE!
I SAID--



--HANDS OVER
YOUR...

...WELL,
WELL...LOOK
WHO'S BEING
A GOOD LITTLE
MONSTER.



ALL RIGHT,
THEN. TAKE
HIM DOWN,
BOYS!



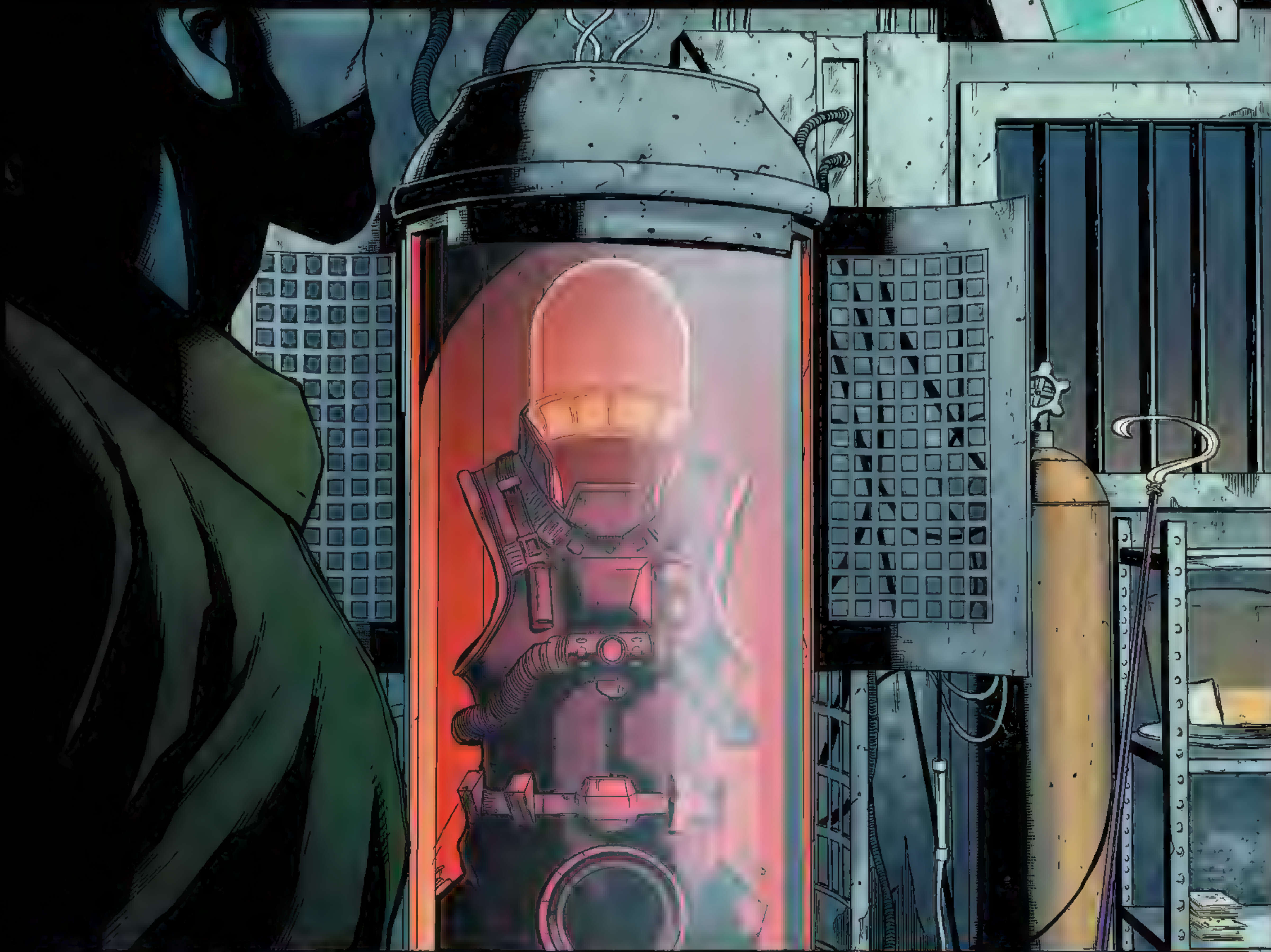
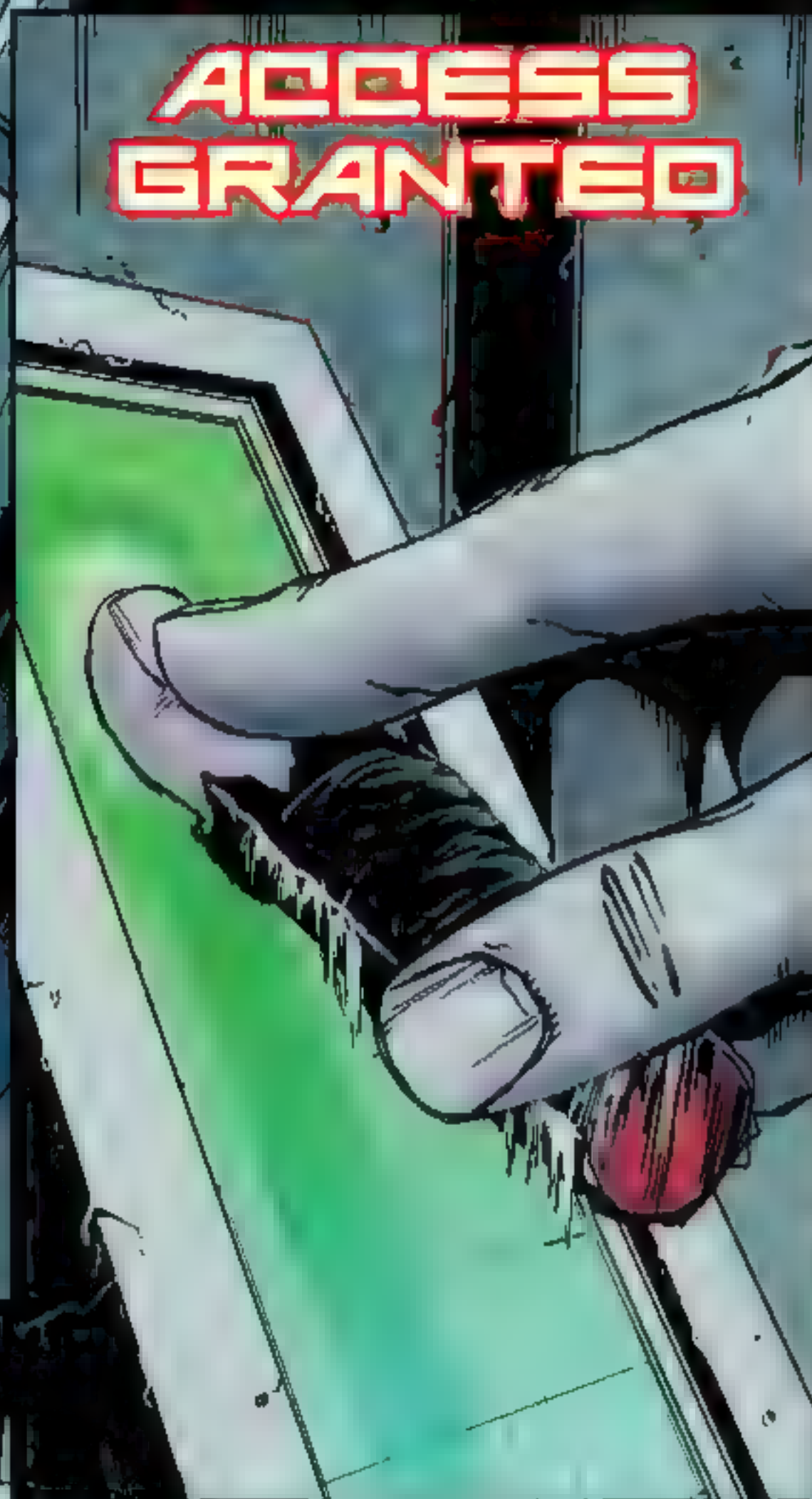
GOOD TO
SEE YOU COME TO
YOUR SENSES,
FREAK.

BRIAN,
LOOK, THERE'S
SOMETHING
IN HIS--



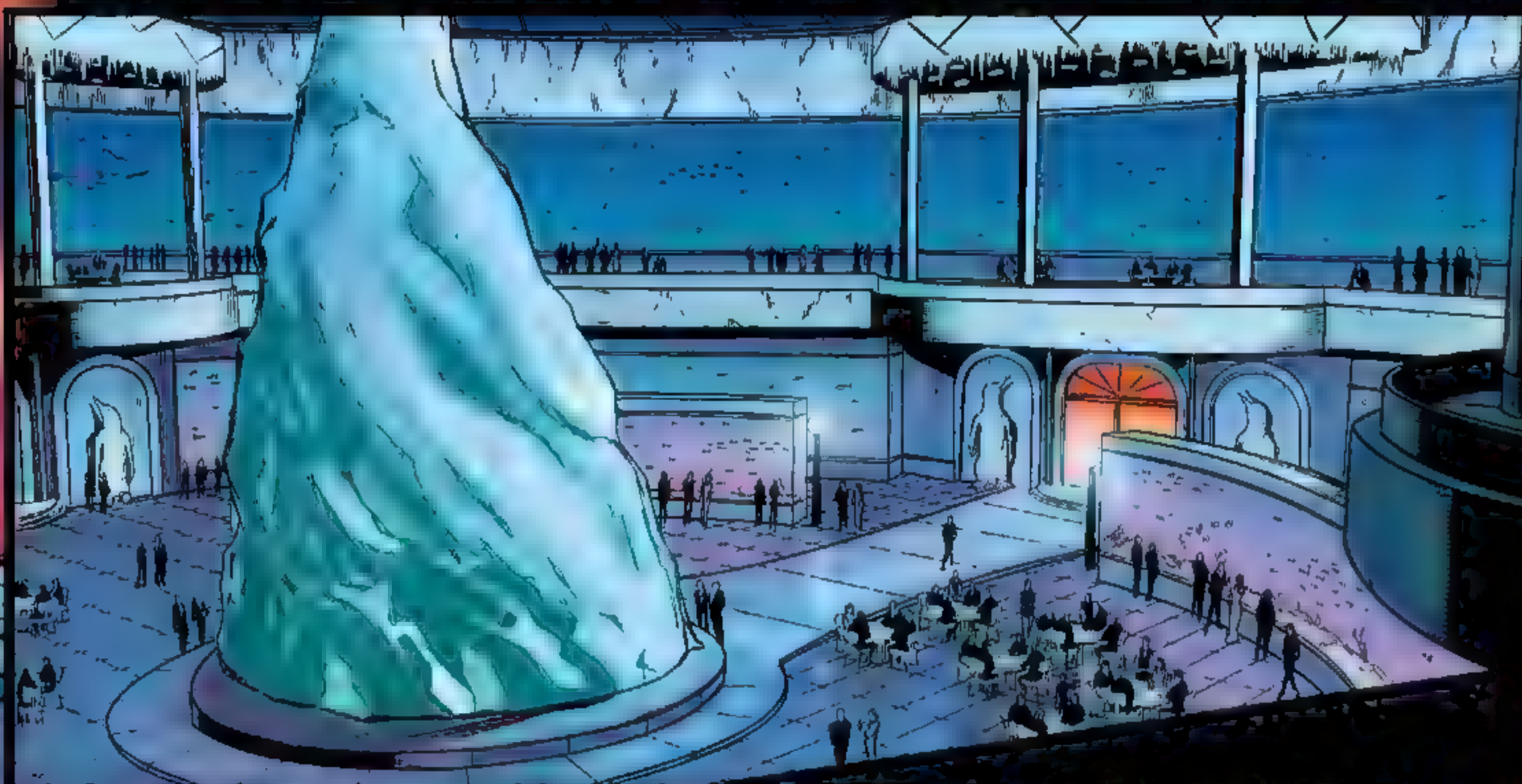
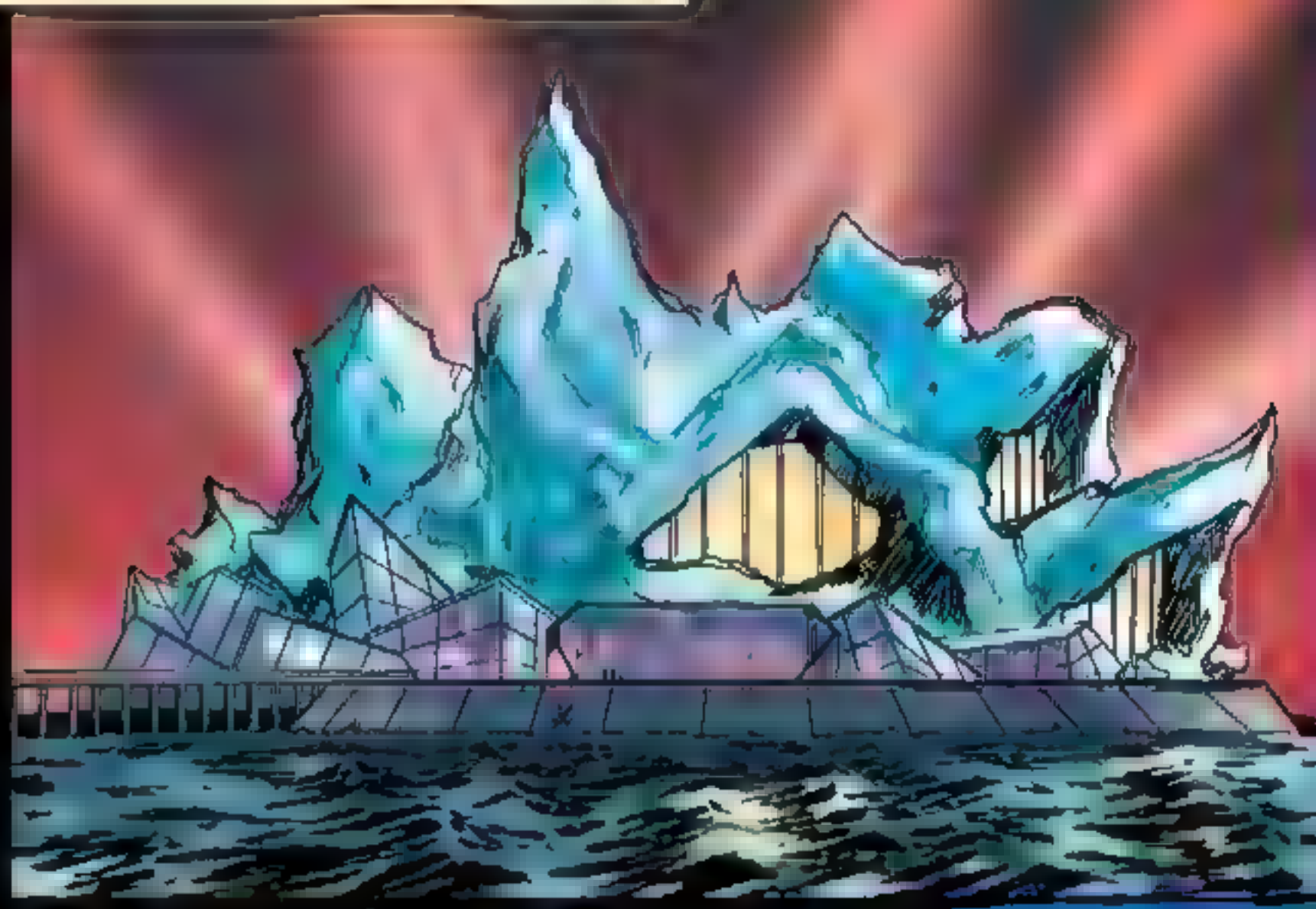
AAAGH!

IT
BURNS! THE
COLD...IT
BURNS!

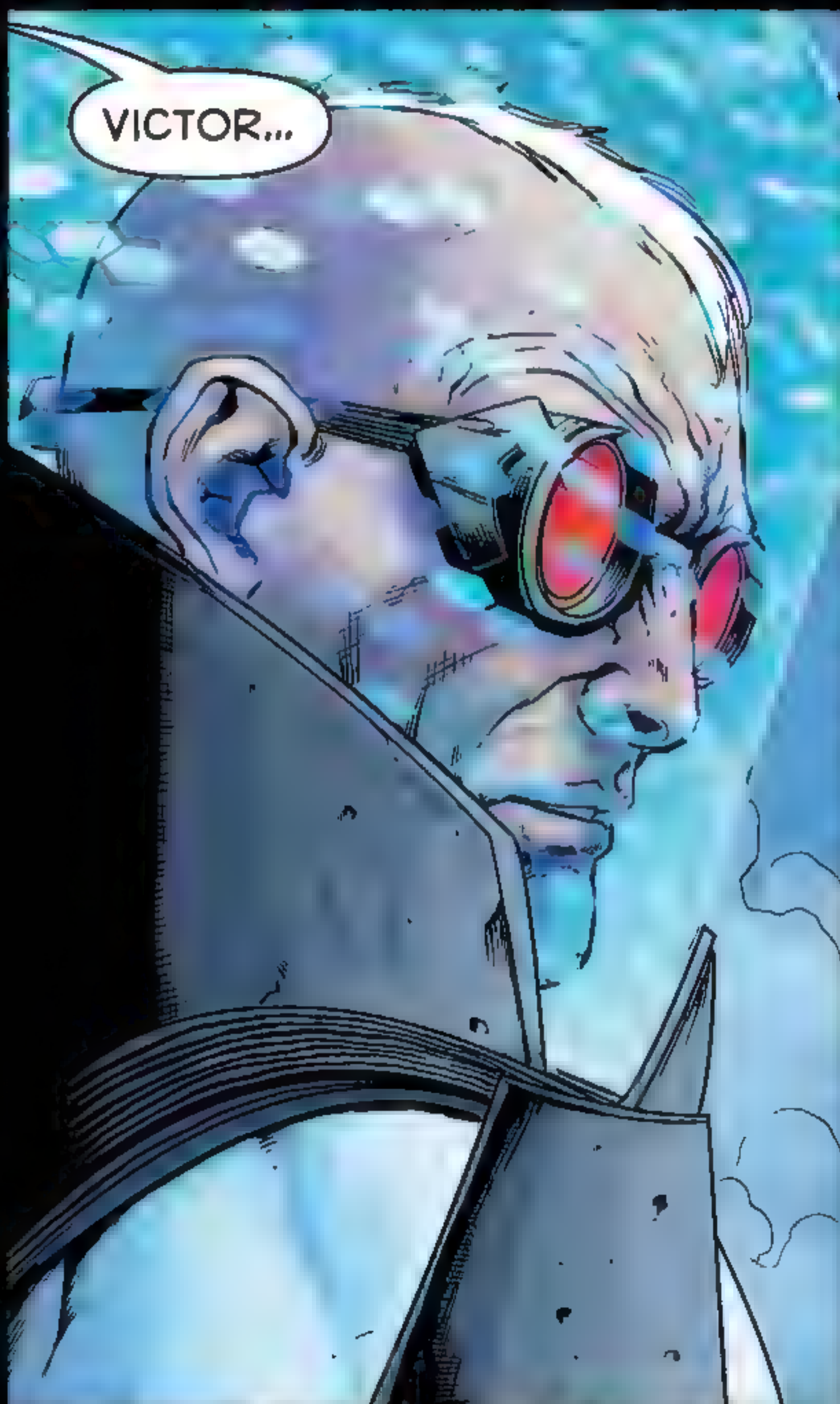
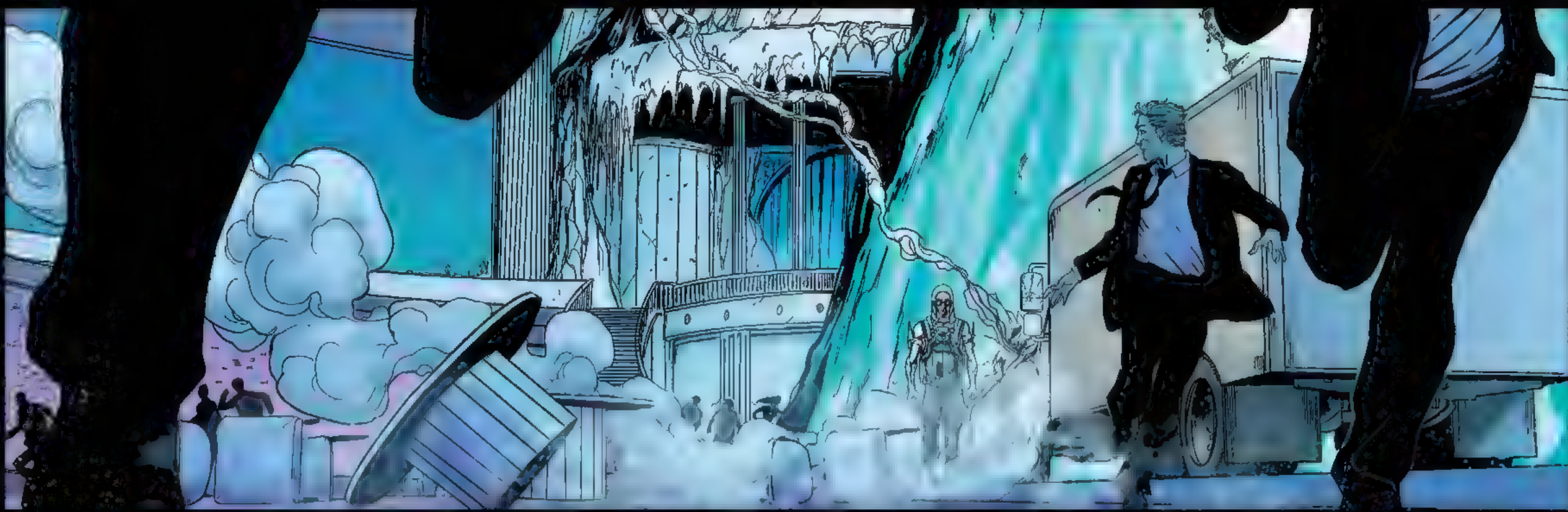


THE ICEBERG CASINO...

12:45 AM...







VICTOR...



...IS THIS
ANY WAY TO
TREAT YOUR
FRIENDS?



WE COULD HAVE SET A
MEET. I WAS EXPECTING
YOUR CALL FROM THE
MOMENT THE ARKHAM
INCIDENT CAME
ACROSS THE
POLICE WIRES.

DO YOU
REALIZE HOW
MUCH THIS WILL
COST ME?

WHAT AM I
SUPPOSED TO
TELL THE POLICE,
WHO ARE NO
DOUBT ONLY
MINUTES
BEHIND
YOU?



THE PUBLIC ENJOYS ITS
LITTLE NARRATIVES,
MR. COBBLEPOT.

MOVE A FEW
HUNDRED THOUSAND
DOLLARS OF YOUR
LEGITIMATE MONEY INTO
ONE OF YOUR SECRET
VAULTS AND REPORT
A ROBBERY.

THEY WILL
READILY ACCEPT
IT AS AN EXTENSION
OF MY PERCEIVED
FETISHIZATION
OF ICE.



AN ELEGANT SOLUTION, TO BE SURE.

I HAVE TO SAY, THOUGH, VICTOR, YOU SEEM...*DIFFERENT* THIS TIME. WHAT IS IT YOU'RE AFTER?



AS A CHILD, I USED TO PERFORM MY OWN EXPERIMENTS ON ANIMALS FROM OUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

I WOULD FREEZE DIFFERENT PARTS OF A SPECIMEN, WETTING THEM DOWN AND ICING THEM--A PAW OR A TAIL--AND THEN WATCH THE EFFECT ON THE CREATURE'S LIFE.

BIRDS WERE THE MOST VULNERABLE SUBJECTS OF ALL. DID YOU KNOW THAT IF A BIRD LOSES EVEN A *SINGLE TOE* TO FROST-BITE, IT WILL DIE FROM HELPLESSNESS?

JUST ONE TOE.

I WAS ONLY ASKING.

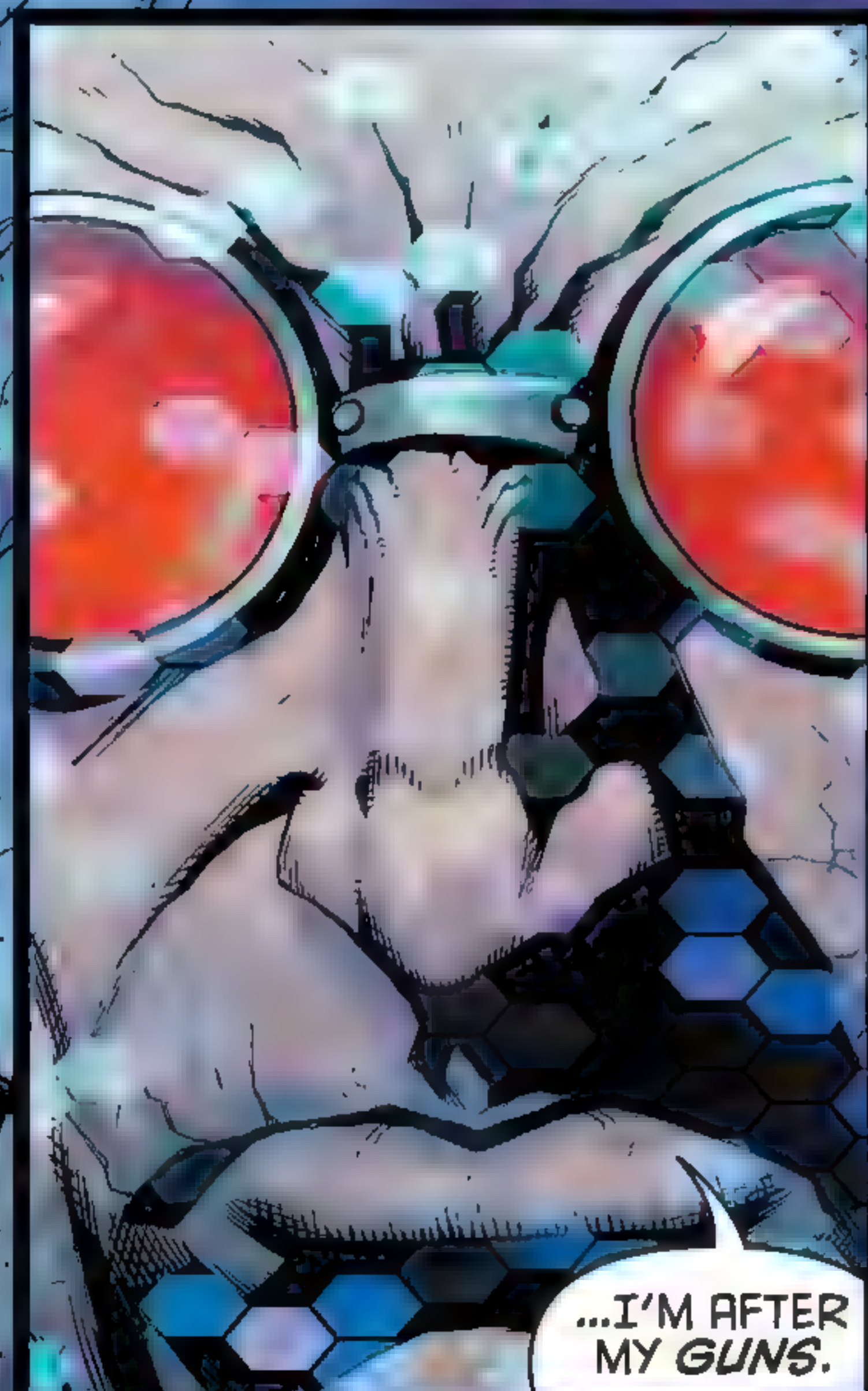


YOU ASK WHAT I'M AFTER, OSWALD?

FREEDOM. FREEDOM FROM THIS CITY.

I HAVE BEEN ABUSED BY *BATS* AND USED BY *OWLS*, AND NOW ALL I WANT IS TO SETTLE MY SCORES ONCE AND FOR ALL--RETRIEVE MY WIFE, MY NORA, AND LEAVE THIS WRETCHED PLACE BEHIND FOREVER.

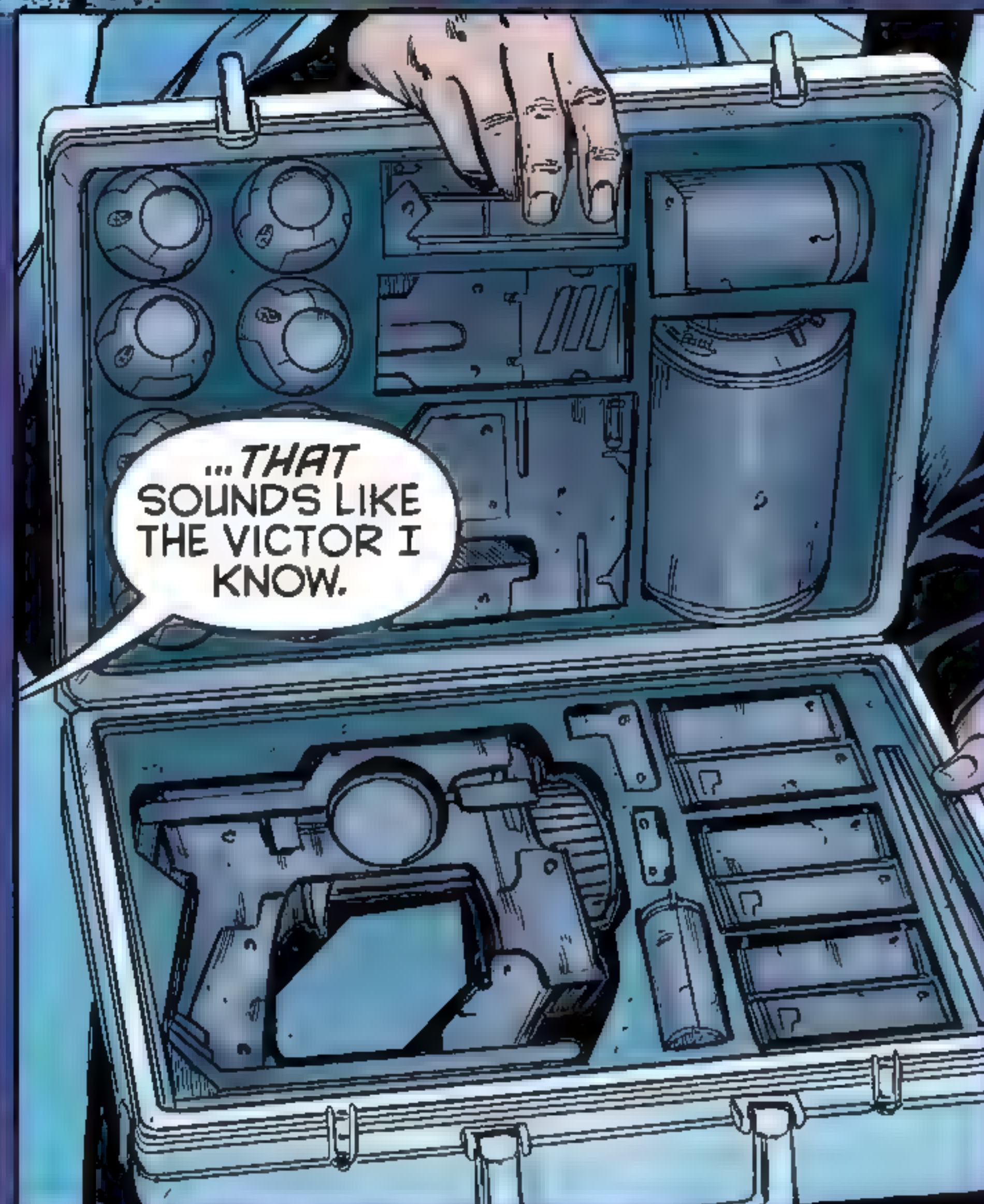
MORE PRESSINGLY, THOUGH...



...I'M AFTER MY *GUNS*.



WAH WAH--SEE, MY FRIEND...



...*THAT* SOUNDS LIKE THE VICTOR I KNOW.



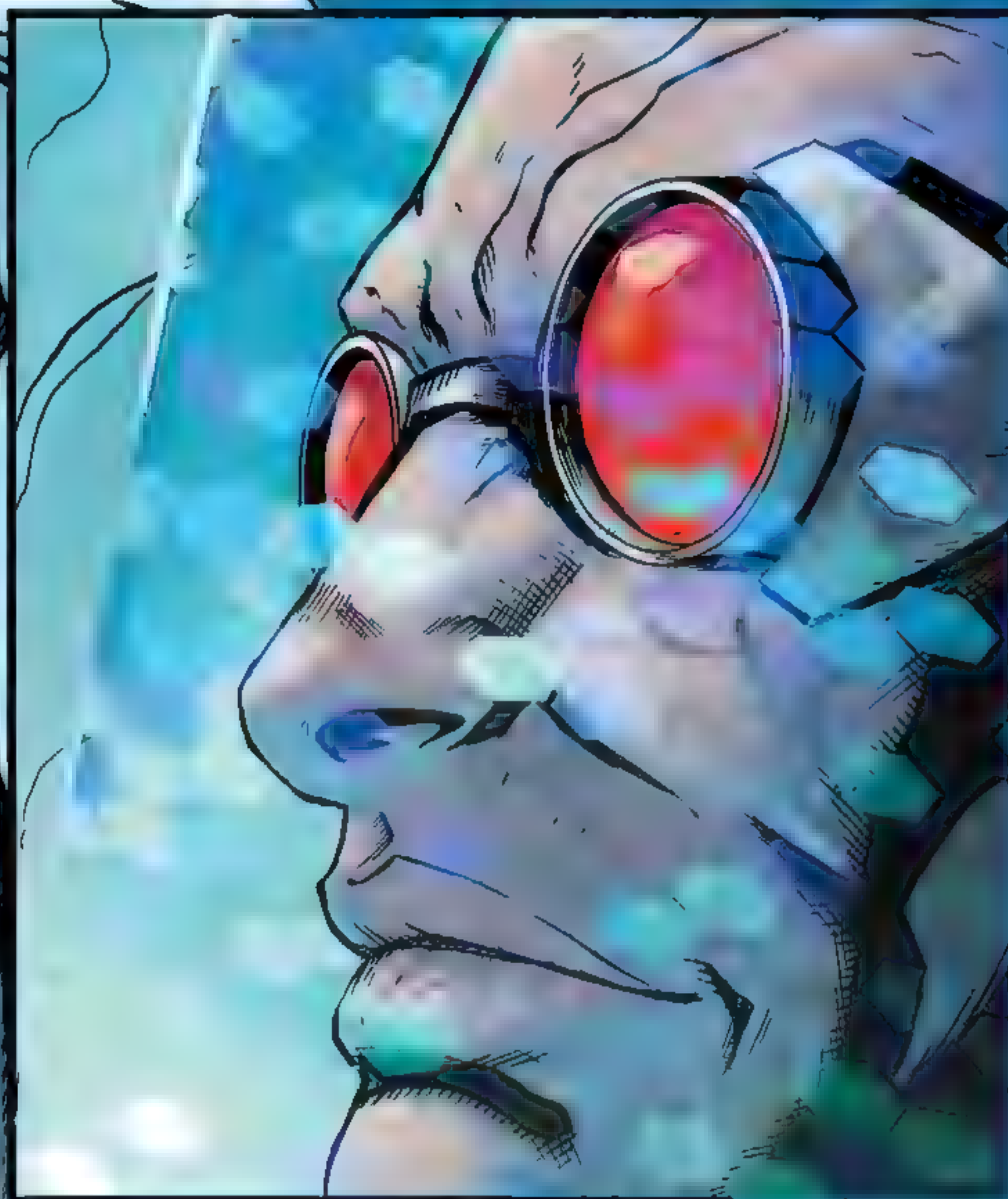
NOW,
LET'S MAKE THIS
"ROBBERY" LOOK
REAL, VICTOR. I
WON'T BE PERSE-
CUTED ON YOUR
BEHALF.

AS YOU
WISH.



BUT MR.
COBBLEPOT...

NO!



AND NOW FOR
VENGEANCE.



VENGEANCE
ON THE MAN WHO
STOLE MY NORA
FROM ME...

"...VENGEANCE ON
BRUCE WAYNE."

DR. VICTOR FRIES,
I PRESENT TO YOU THE
PRODIGAL SON, BRUCE WAYNE.

DR. FRIES RUNS THE SMALL
CRYONICS LAB WE KEEP
BENEATH THE LABORATORIES
PROPER. FROZEN HEADS
ABOUND.

DOCTOR, I'M GIVING MR. WAYNE A
TOUR OF HIS KINGDOM, IF YOU WILL.
HE ONLY RECENTLY *RETURNED*
TO GOTHAM.

RIGHT. OF
COURSE. YOU WERE
VACATIONING, I
TAKE IT?

THAT'S ONE WAY OF
PUTTING IT. ISN'T THAT
RIGHT, LUCIUS?

DR. FRIES,
MR. WAYNE HAS BEEN
OUT OF THE COUNTRY
FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

FORGIVE ME.
ADMITTEDLY, I DON'T
GET OUT OF THE LABORATORY
VERY OFTEN. I NOW RECALL
SOMETHING IN THE LOCAL NEWS
ABOUT IT. YOUR RETURN, I MEAN.

DON'T GIVE IT A
SECOND THOUGHT,
DOCTOR. FROM WHAT I
HEAR, YOU'RE DOING
IMPORTANT WORK
DOWN HERE.

YES, YES WE ARE.
THE ADVANCEMENTS
WE'VE MADE IN THE *SLOW-
HEATING PROCESS* OF CRYO-
PRESERVED INDIVIDUALS--

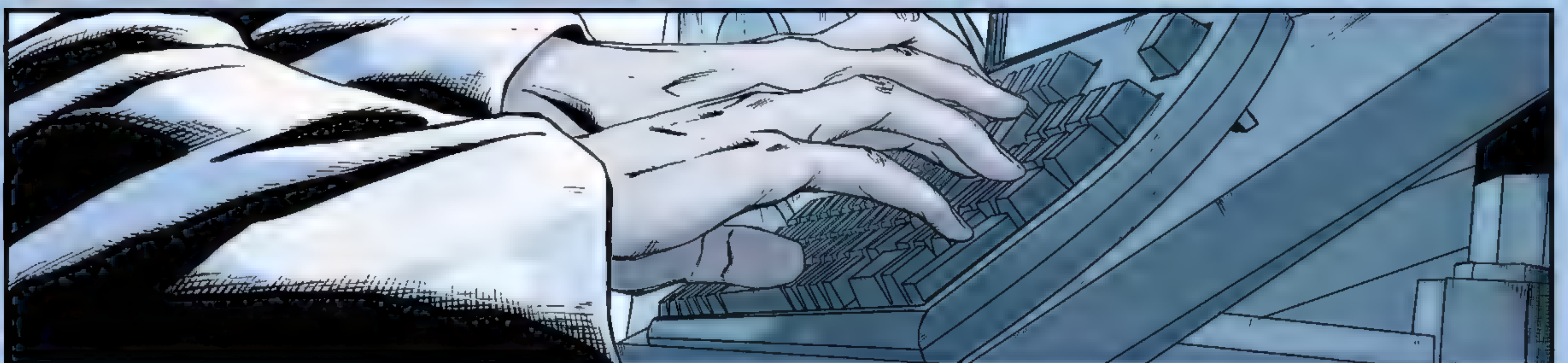
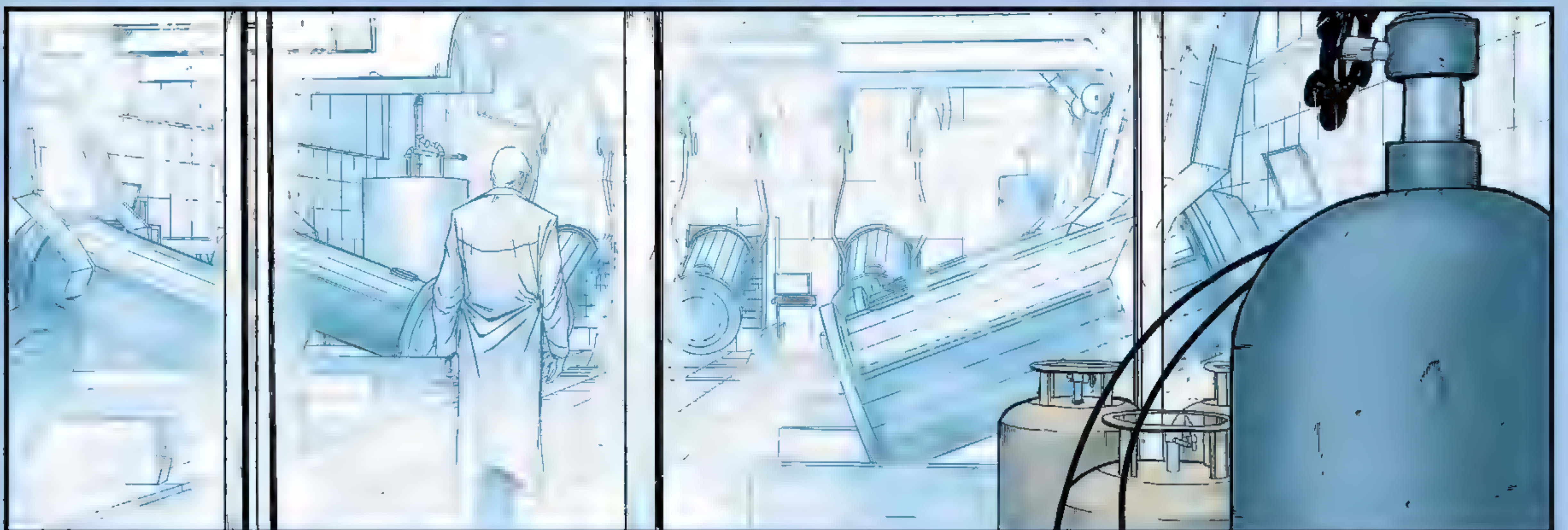
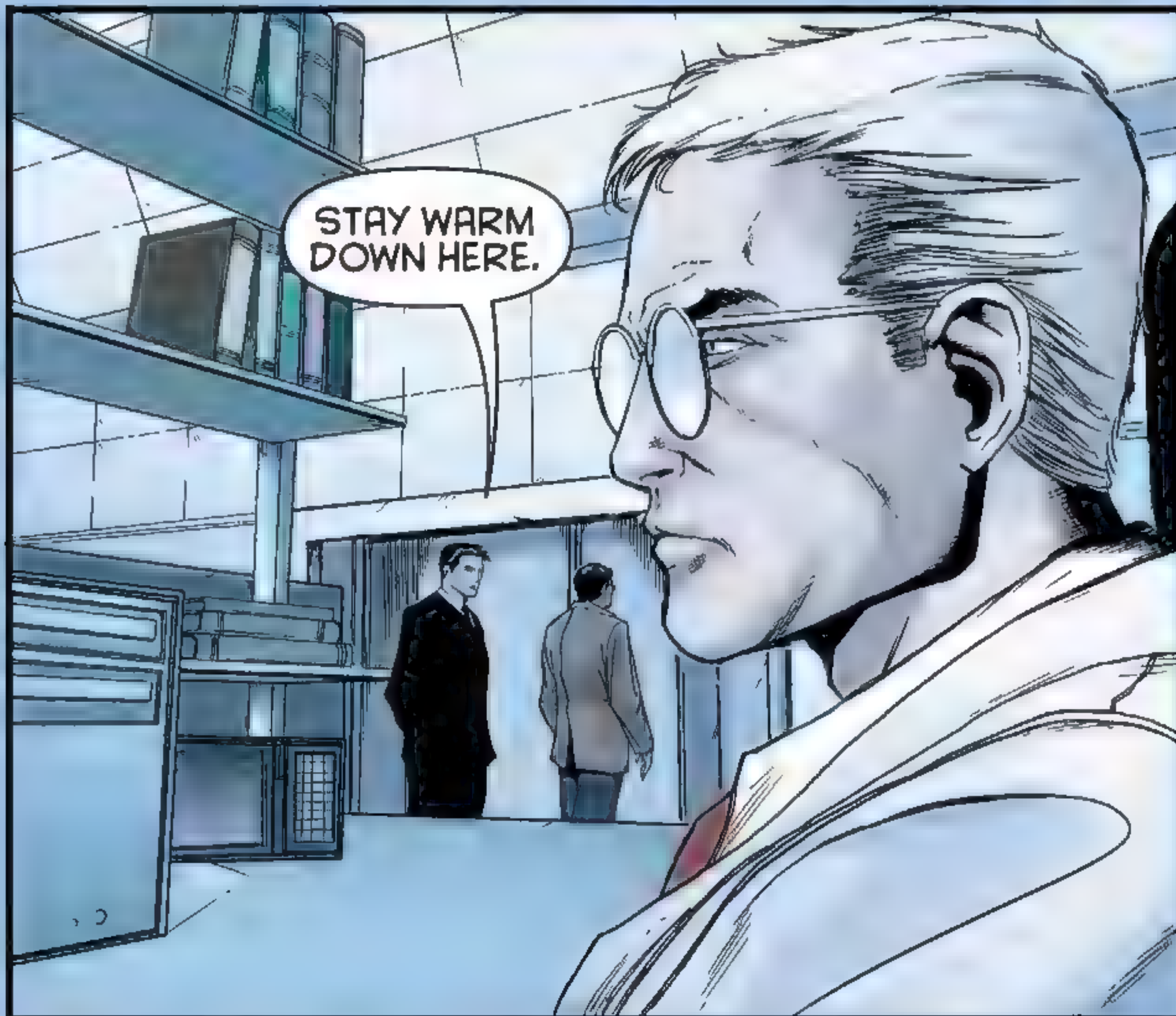
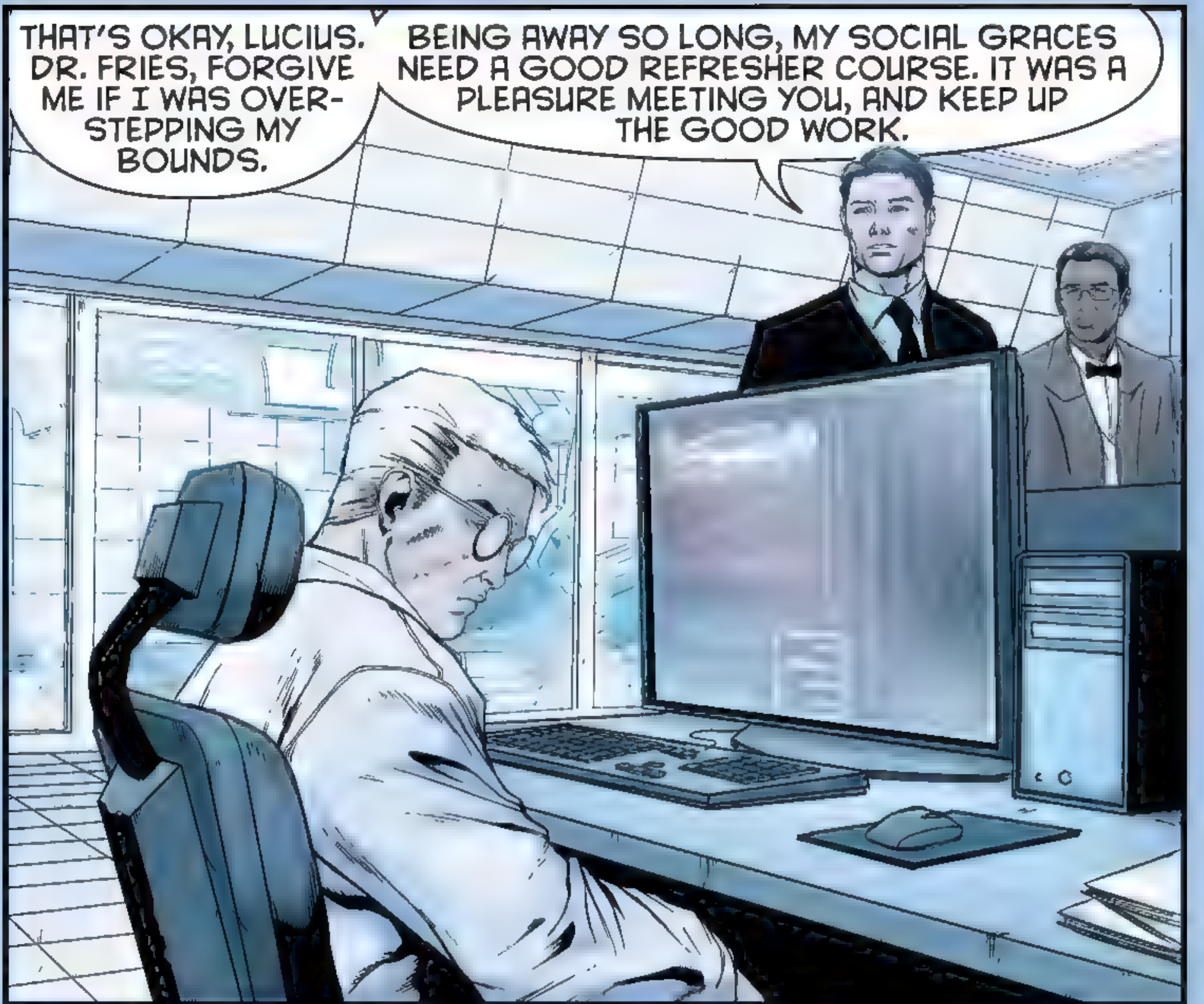
SLOW-HEATING?
LUCIUS, I THOUGHT THE LAB WAS
SUPPOSED TO BE MOVING *AWAY* FROM
CRYONICS, FROZEN MUMMIES AND ALL
THAT, TOWARDS NEWER, MORE SPECIALIZED
FIELDS. LIKE ORGAN VITRIFICATION.

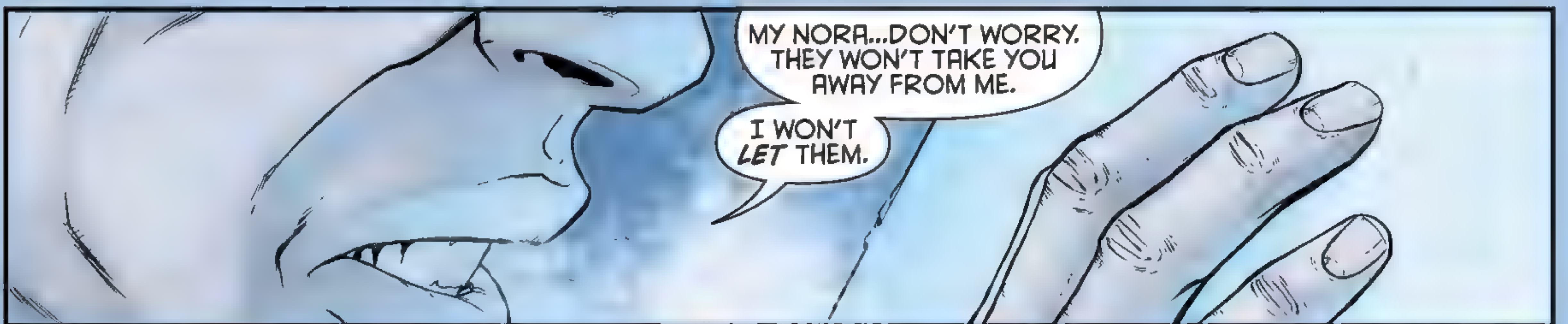
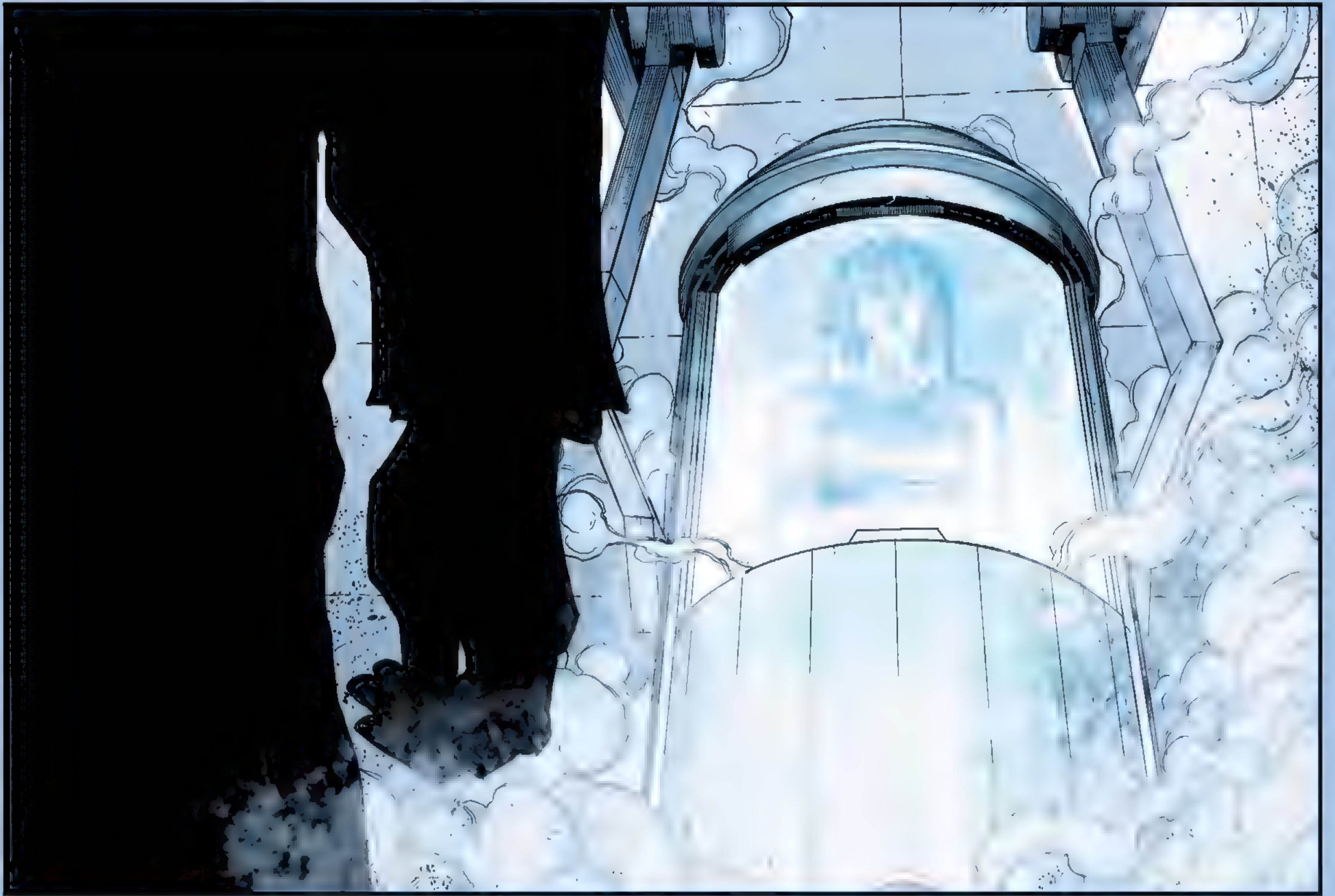
IN FACT, WEREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO TRANSFER THE REST
OF THESE OLD CRYO-PRESERVED BODIES HERE TO
THE GOTHAM UNIVERSITY BIO-LAB?

I FEEL I WAS PRETTY
DIRECT IN SAYING I WASN'T
COMFORTABLE CONTINUING WITH
THIS LINE OF RESEARCH.

MR. WAYNE,
WE CAN DO
BOTH! WE CAN
PURSUE NEW FIELDS
LIKE VITRIFICATION
WHILE STILL PURSU-
ING OUR ORIGINAL
RESEARCH ON THE
REANIMATION OF
CRYO-PRESERVED
INDIVIDUALS.

BOTH...WELL, BE CAREFUL,
DOCTOR. AND KNOW THAT YOU'LL BE UNDER
CLOSE EXAMINATION UNTIL WE DECIDE WHAT
TO DO WITH YOUR PROJECTS DOWN HERE.





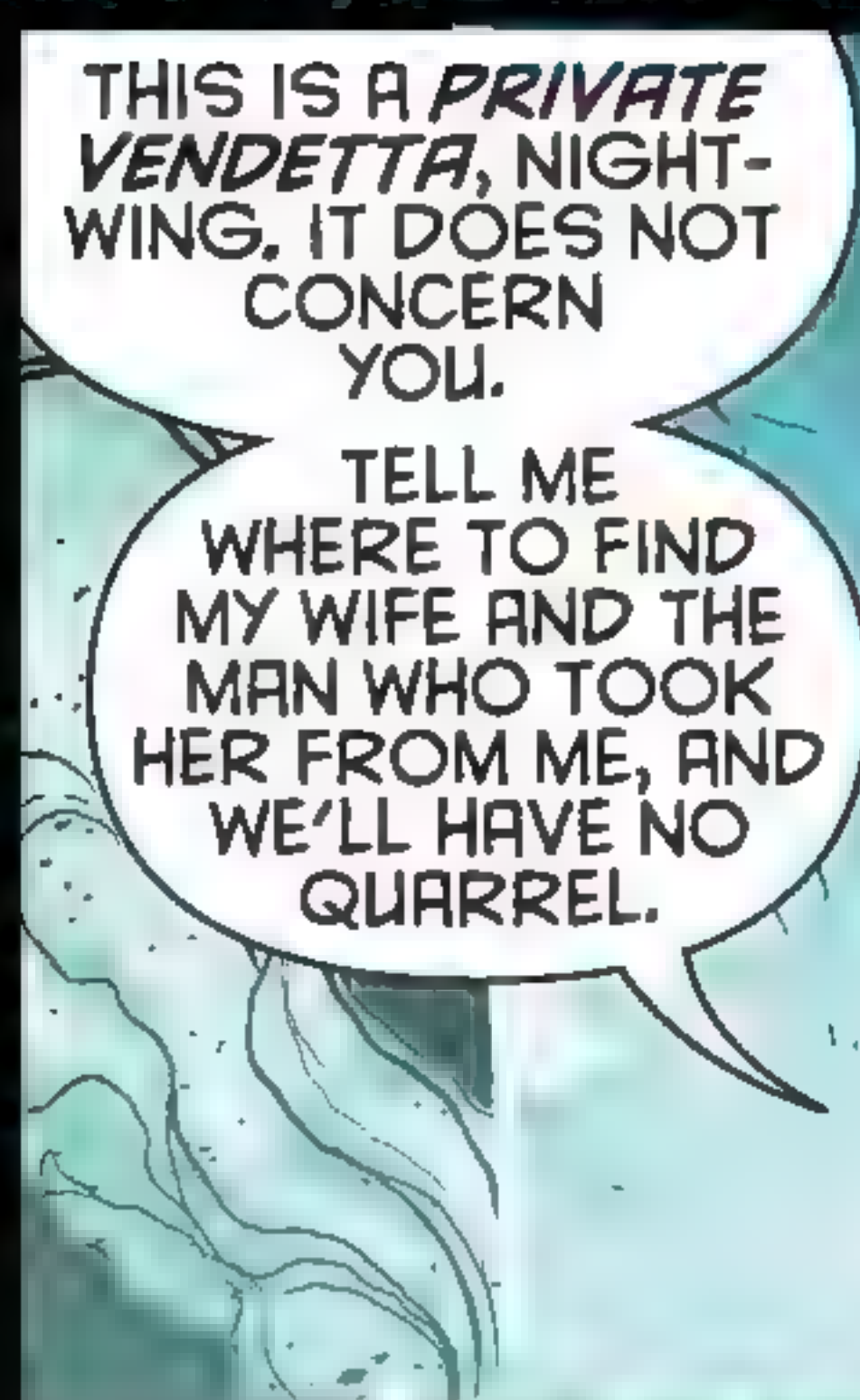




...HELL, I DON'T THINK ANYONE HAS BEEN DOWN IN THIS LAB FOR MONTHS.

THE ONLY REASON IT'S STILL HERE AT ALL IS THAT THERE AREN'T A LOT OF PLACES TO SEND A BORTLOAD OF *HUMAN ICICLES*.

SO IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR YOUR JOB BACK, MR. FREEZE, I DON'T THINK THEY'RE HIRING.



THIS IS A *PRIVATE VENDETTA*, NIGHTWING. IT DOES NOT CONCERN YOU.

TELL ME WHERE TO FIND MY WIFE AND THE MAN WHO TOOK HER FROM ME, AND WE'LL HAVE NO QUARREL.



YEEAAAAH. THAT'S NOT GONNA HAPPEN.

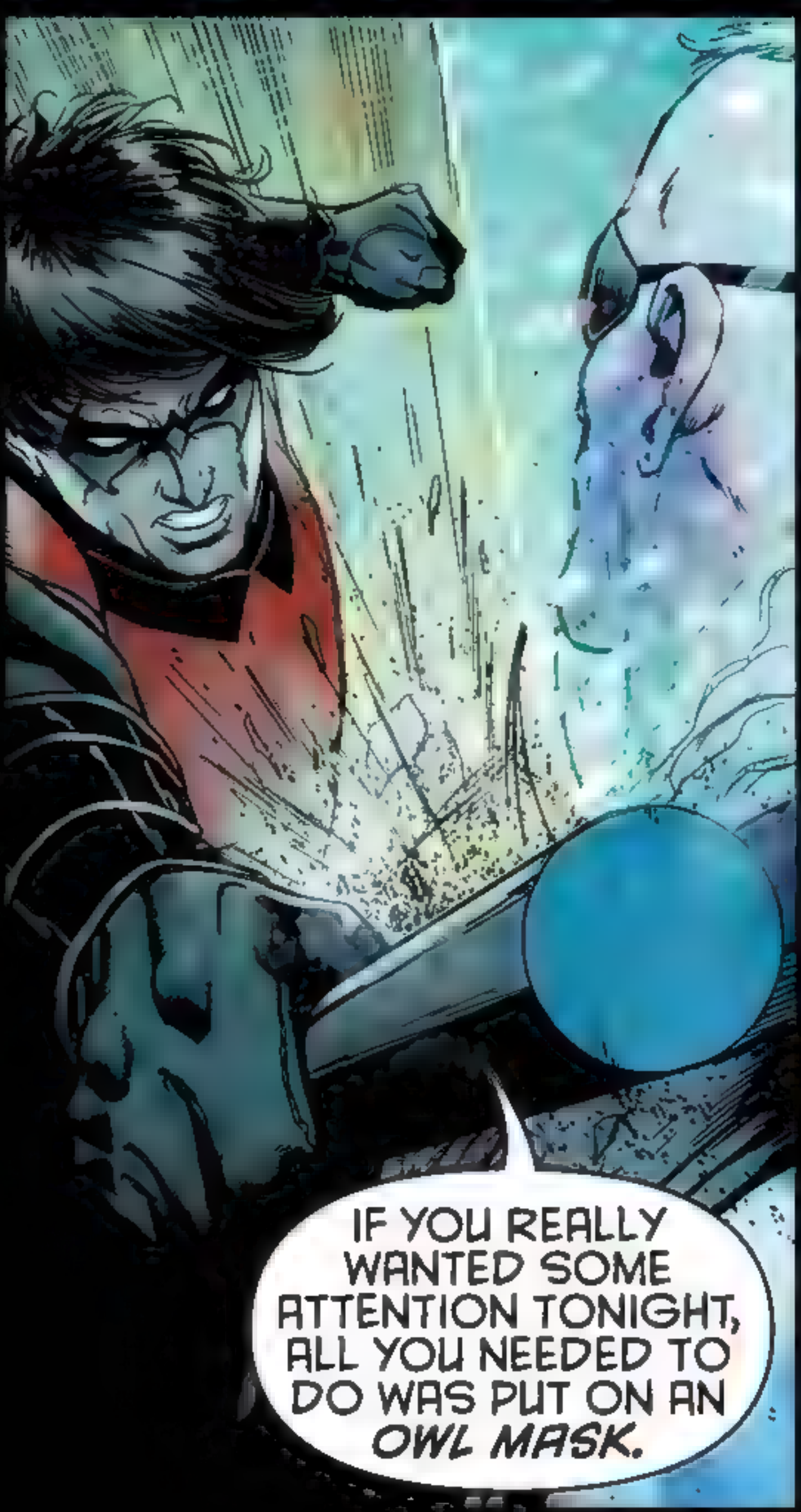
ENOUGH WITH THE BANTER, NIGHTWING. LET'S GET TO WORK.



SO
BE IT.



KRAK



IF YOU REALLY
WANTED SOME
ATTENTION TONIGHT,
ALL YOU NEEDED TO
DO WAS PUT ON AN
OWL MASK.



BUT YOU'VE ALREADY HAD YOUR FUN WITH
THE COURT, HAVEN'T YOU? HA!



KEEP
LAUGHING...



...ALTHOUGH
THAT MIGHT BE
DIFFICULT...

KRAK



...WHEN YOUR LUNGS FREEZE INSIDE YOUR CHEST!

OH, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD...



...WON'T THE TWO OF YOU JUST SHUT UP?



ROBIN, NO!



AARGH!



I HAVE NO DOUBT YOUR BENEFACTOR HAS THE MEANS TO THAW OUT YOUR FRIEND.

BUT IF YOU DON'T GIVE ME THE INFORMATION I REQUIRE, I'LL SHATTER HIS ARM IN MY FIST.



VICTOR, IT'S
BRUCE WAYNE.
LET THE BOY
GO.

WAYNE.
SHOW YOUR
FACE!



TAKE THE
ELEVATOR UP TO
THE PENTHOUSE,
VICTOR. WE CAN
STILL TALK THIS
THROUGH. MAN
TO MAN.



I GUARANTEE YOU,
MR. WAYNE...



...TALKING
IS NOT ON THE
AGENDA.

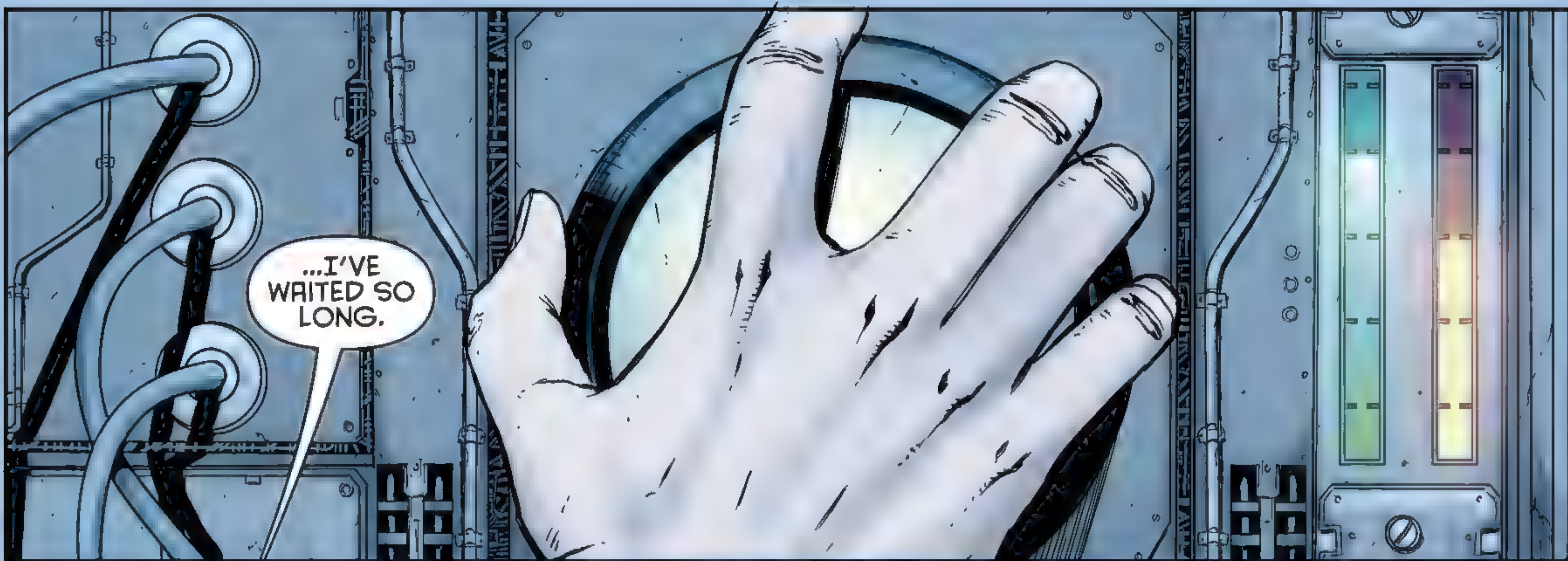


WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?
GO *AFTER*
HIM, YOU
IDIOT!

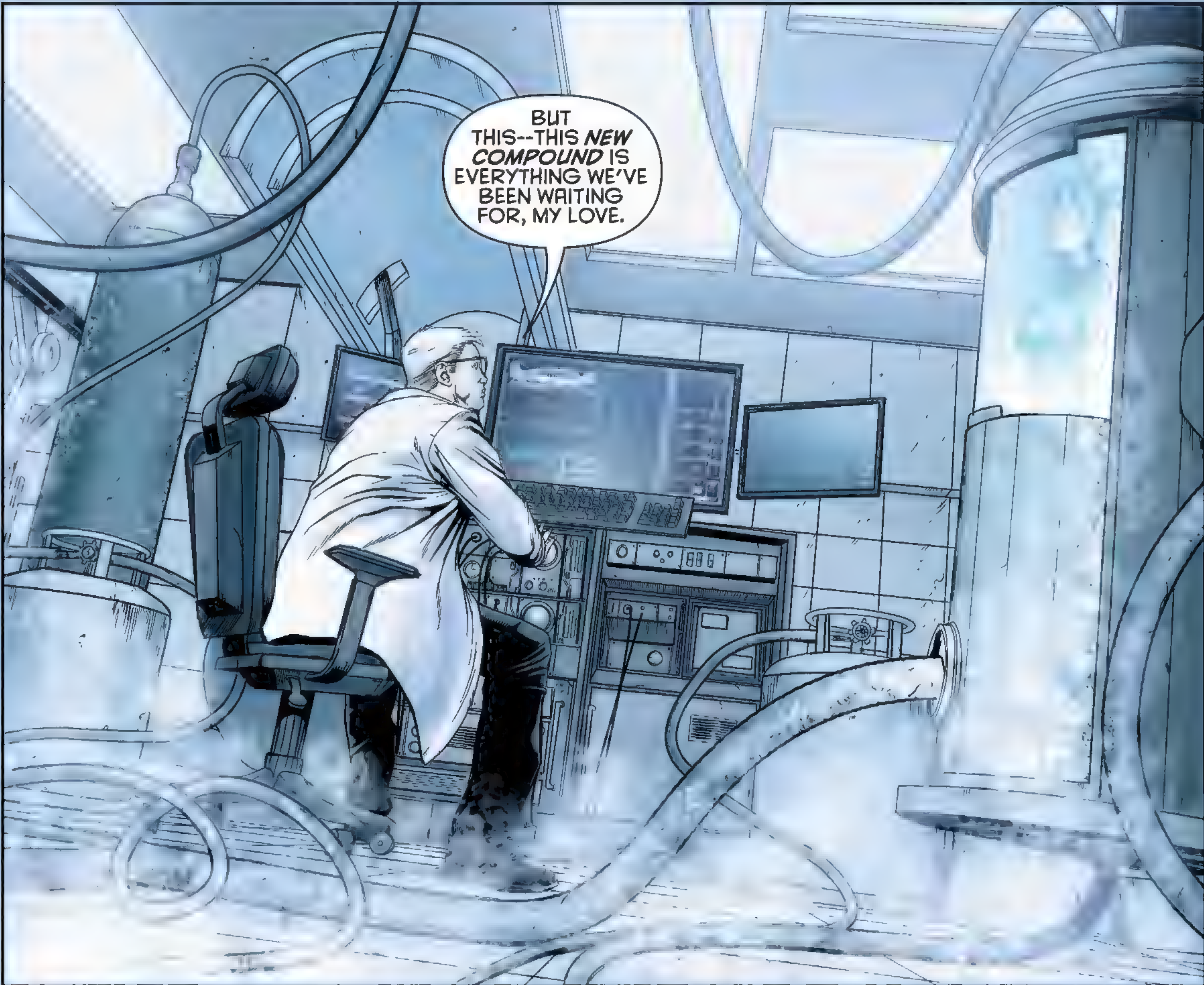
CALM DOWN,
ROBIN... BATMAN
WANTS TO SETTLE
THIS DIRECTLY.
JUST THE TWO
OF THEM.



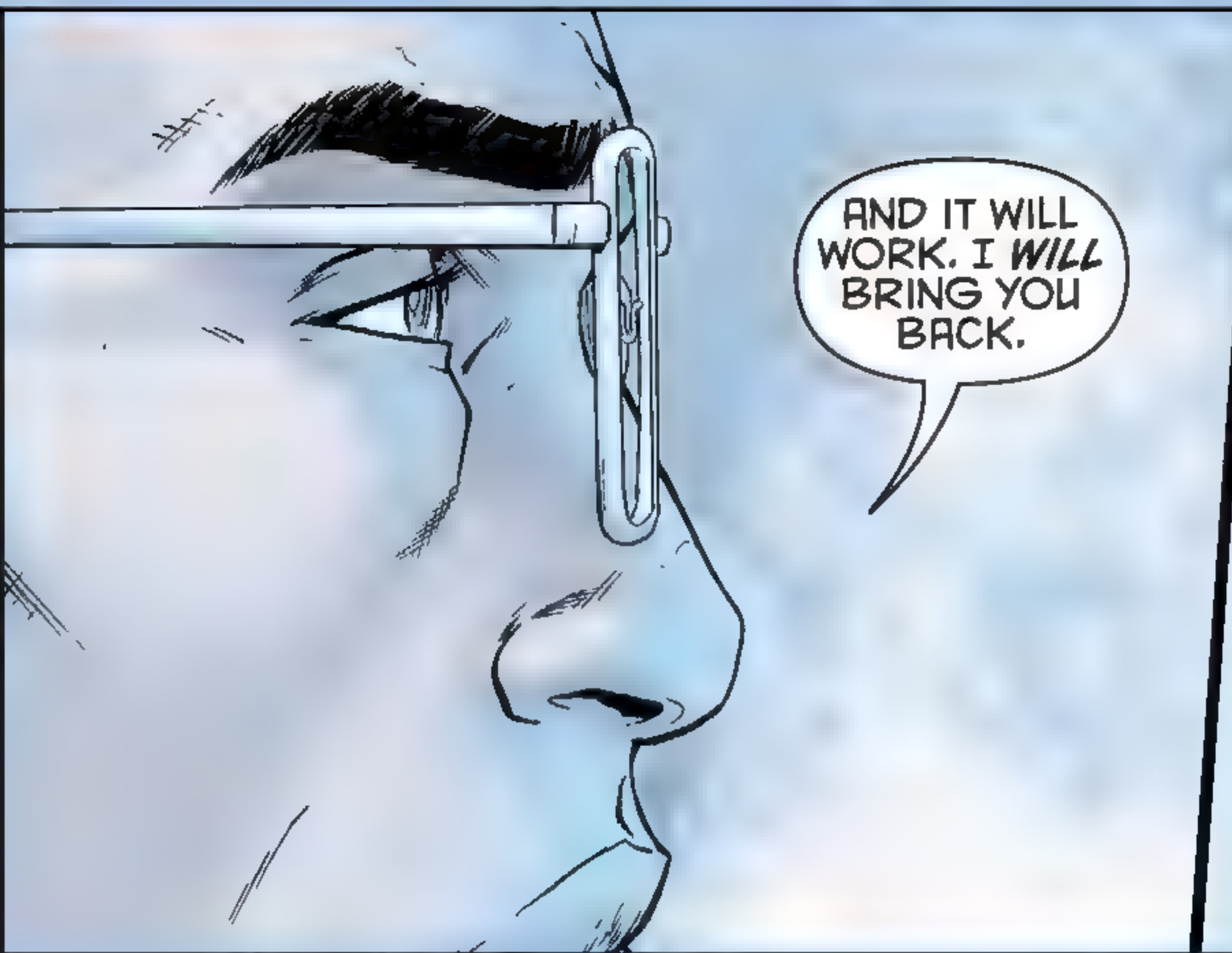
"IT'S TIME, NORA. TIME FOR
US TO BE *TOGETHER*..."



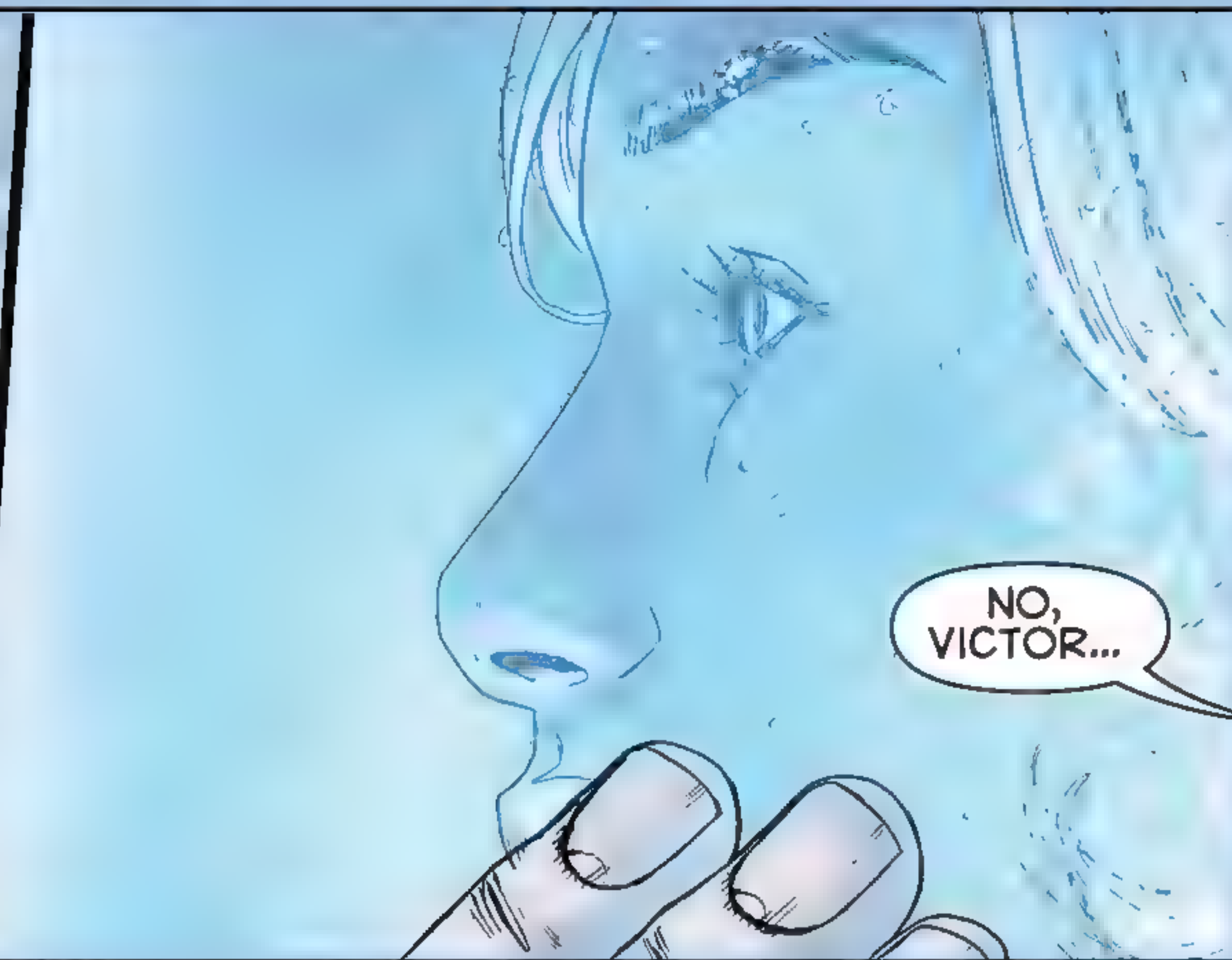
...I'VE
WAITED SO
LONG.



BUT
THIS--THIS **NEW
COMPOUND** IS
EVERYTHING WE'VE
BEEN WAITING
FOR, MY LOVE.



AND IT WILL
WORK. I **WILL**
BRING YOU
BACK.



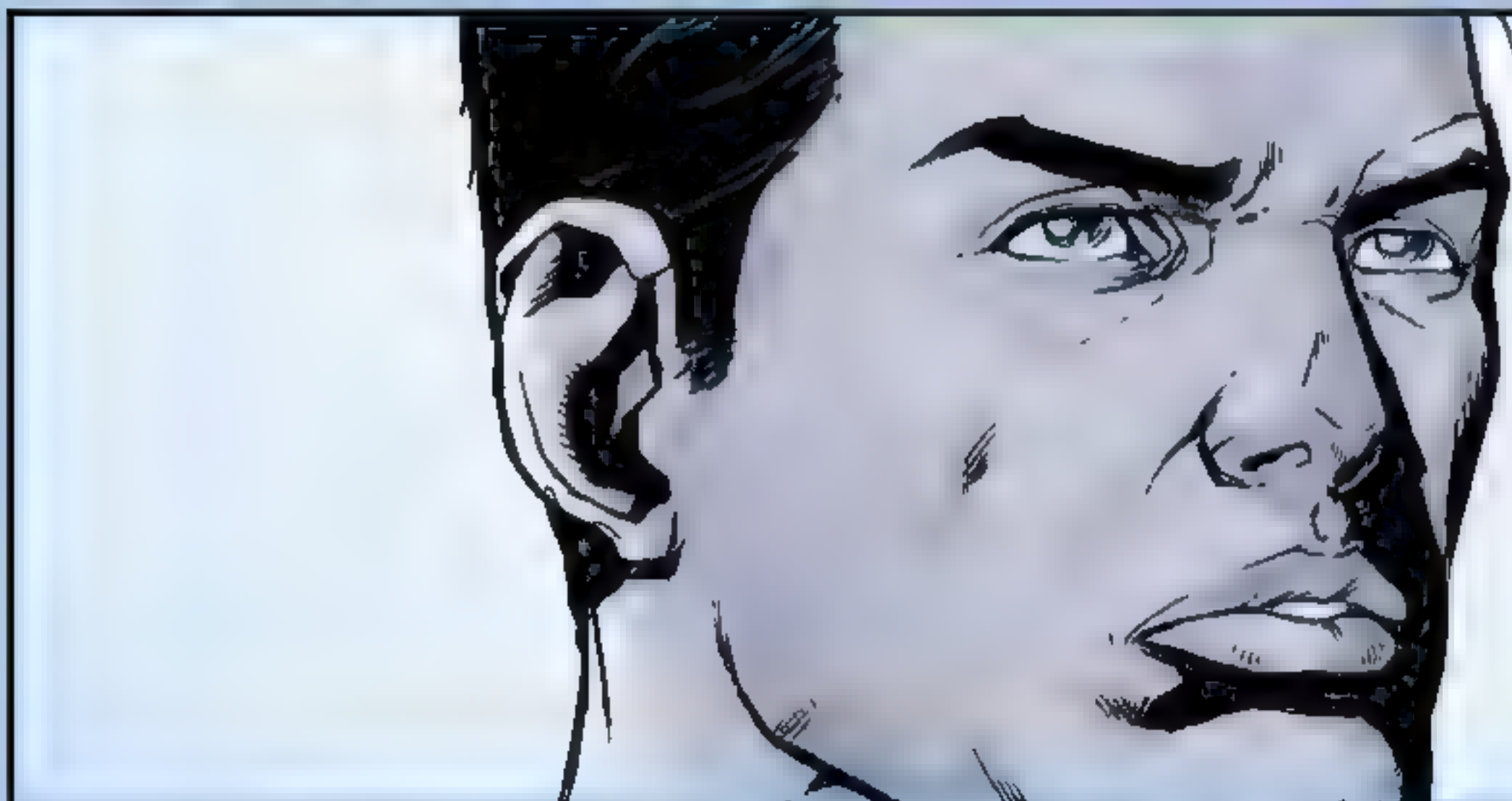
NO,
VICTOR...



...YOU WON'T.



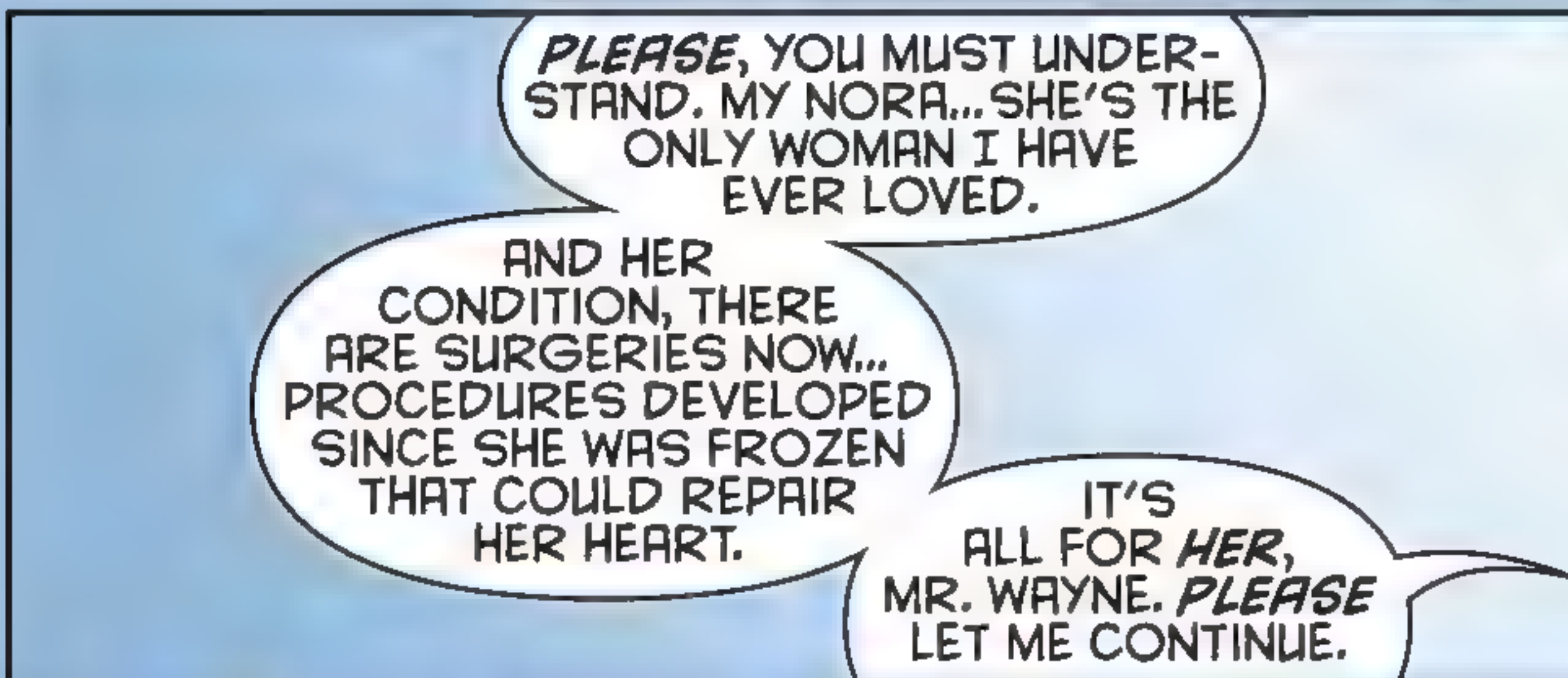
MR. WAYNE!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
THIS IS NORA, MY WIFE, AND--



I UNDERSTAND *PERFECTLY*, DR. FRIES. I SHUT THIS PROJECT DOWN MONTHS AGO, AND YET YOU'VE CONTINUED TO WORK ON YOUR OWN *PRIVATE EXPERIMENTS*.

YOUR METHODS HERE HAVEN'T BEEN REVIEWED OR TESTED, AND YOU'RE ABOUT TO ADMINISTER THEM ON A *PERSON* WHO HAS NO MEANS OF CONSENT.

I *CAN'T* ALLOW YOU TO CONTINUE PLAYING MAD SCIENTIST WHILE YOU NEGLECT THE RESEARCH YOU WERE HIRED TO DO.



PLEASE, YOU MUST UNDERSTAND. MY NORA... SHE'S THE ONLY WOMAN I HAVE EVER LOVED.

AND HER CONDITION, THERE ARE SURGERIES NOW... PROCEDURES DEVELOPED SINCE SHE WAS FROZEN THAT COULD REPAIR HER HEART.

IT'S ALL FOR *HER*, MR. WAYNE. *PLEASE* LET ME CONTINUE.



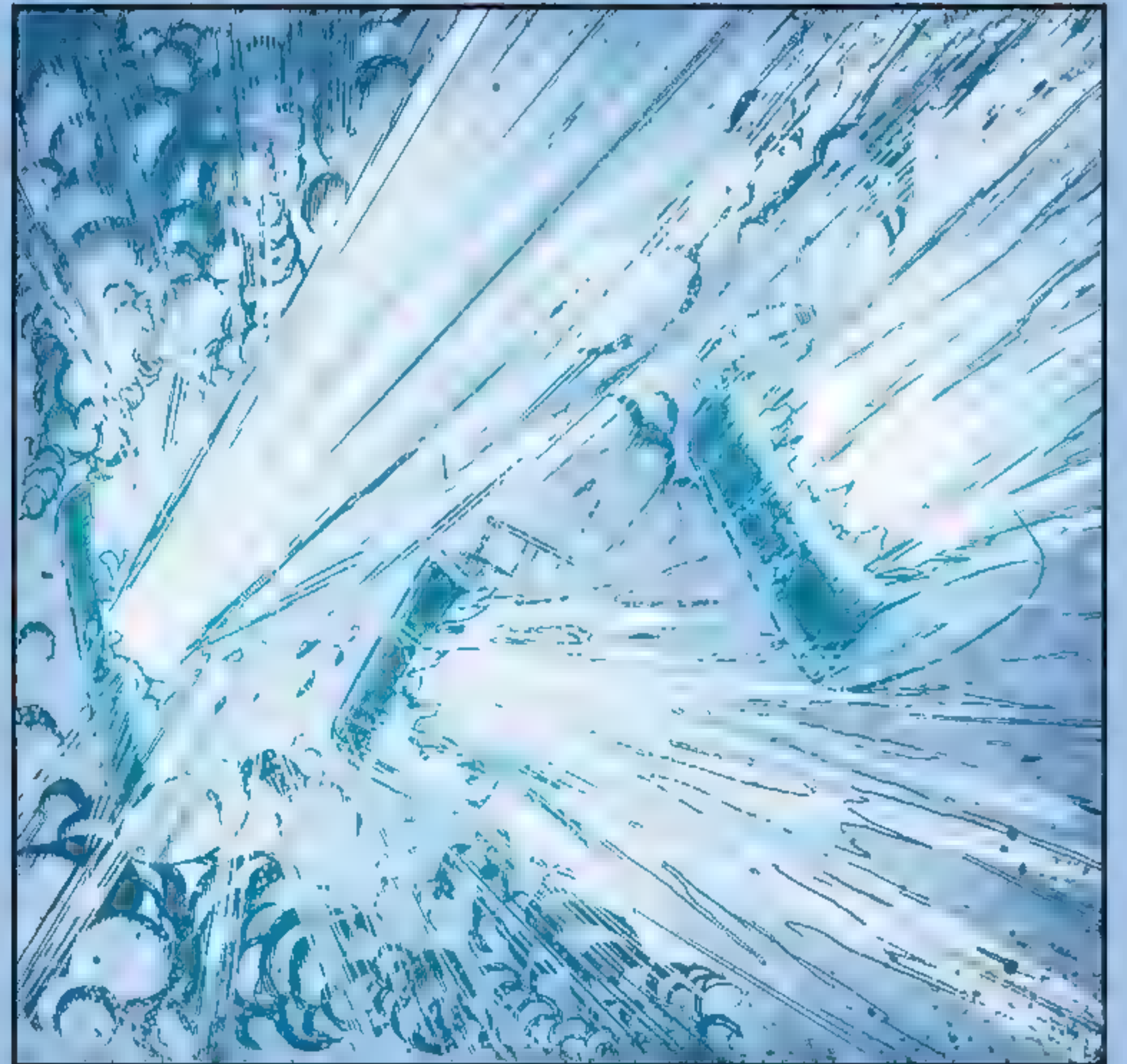
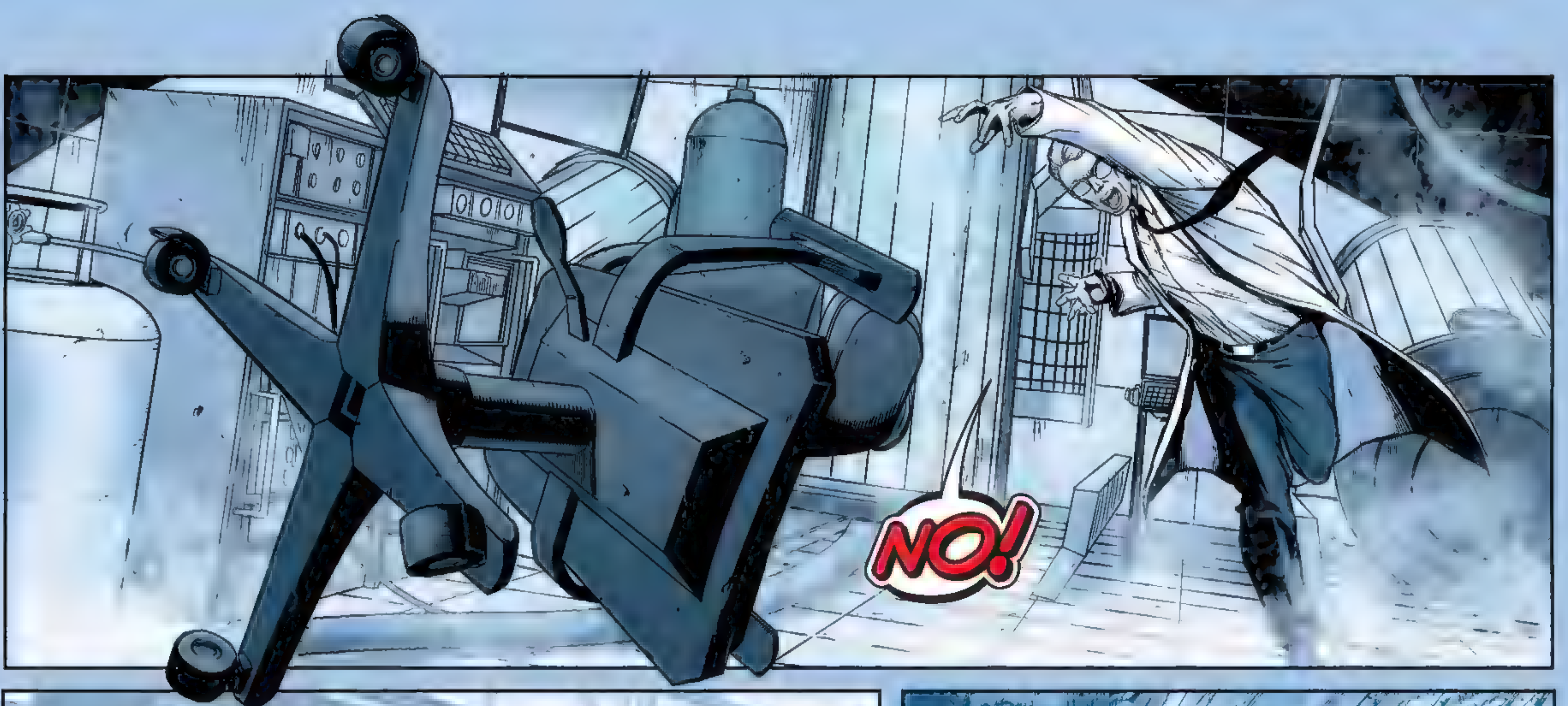
NO, VICTOR. I'VE CALLED THE AUTHORITIES.



BUT SHE'S...NO. YOU *CAN'T*! YOU CAN'T TAKE HER FROM ME!



I CAN, AND I *WILL*. SHE'S STAYING HERE. AND YOU'RE GOING.



THE CHEMICALS SEEM TO HAVE RADICALLY **ALTERED** HIS BIOLOGY...IT'S AS THOUGH EACH INDIVIDUAL SKIN CELL IS CAPTURING AND **STORING** THE COLD.

HIS BODY TEMPERATURE IS RUNNING AT TWENTY-THREE DEGREES FAHRENHEIT, IT SHOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO STILL BE **ALIVE**...IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE SUIT, I'M NOT SURE HE WOULD BE.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF HE EXPOSED HIMSELF TO ANY KIND OF HEAT?

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY FOR SURE, BUT I THINK HE'D **BOIL ALIVE**.

WHUH--

QUIET. HE'S WAKING UP... WHERE ARE THE GOGGLES?

WHUH--

HERE, THESE SHOULD HELP THE PAIN...YOUR EYES HAVEN'T QUITE RECEIVED THE MESSAGE FROM THE REST OF YOUR BODY.

YOU'LL NEED TO KEEP THESE ON AT **ALL TIMES** TO PREVENT YOUR EYES FROM FREEZING IN THEIR SOCKETS.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND, ME? YOU'VE BEEN IN A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT...IT'S A MIRACLE YOU **SURVIVED AT ALL**, MR. FRIES.

MY GOD! HE'S BREAKING OUT!

NO PLE--**AFGH!**

WAYNE...

...BRUCE WAYNE!



"...I'M COMING
FOR YOU."



YOU
CANNOT HIDE FROM
ME, MR. WAYNE.



YOU
WILL GIVE ME
BACK MY...

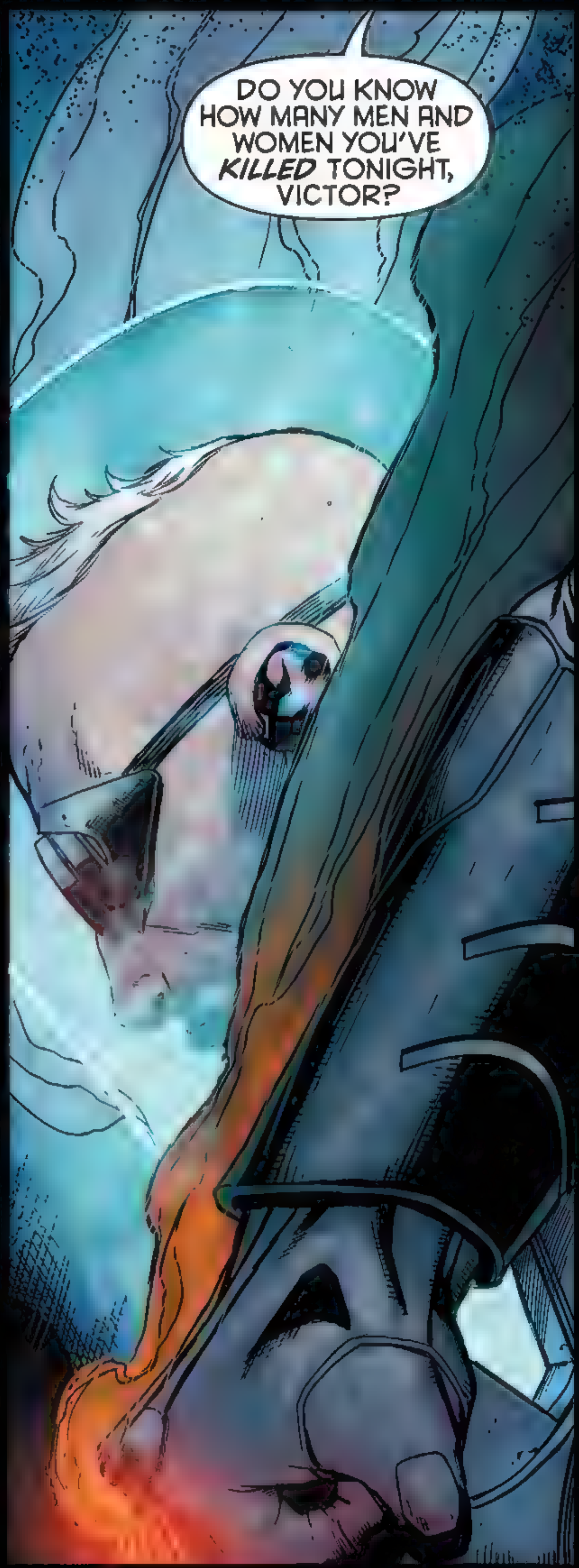


...NORAF?

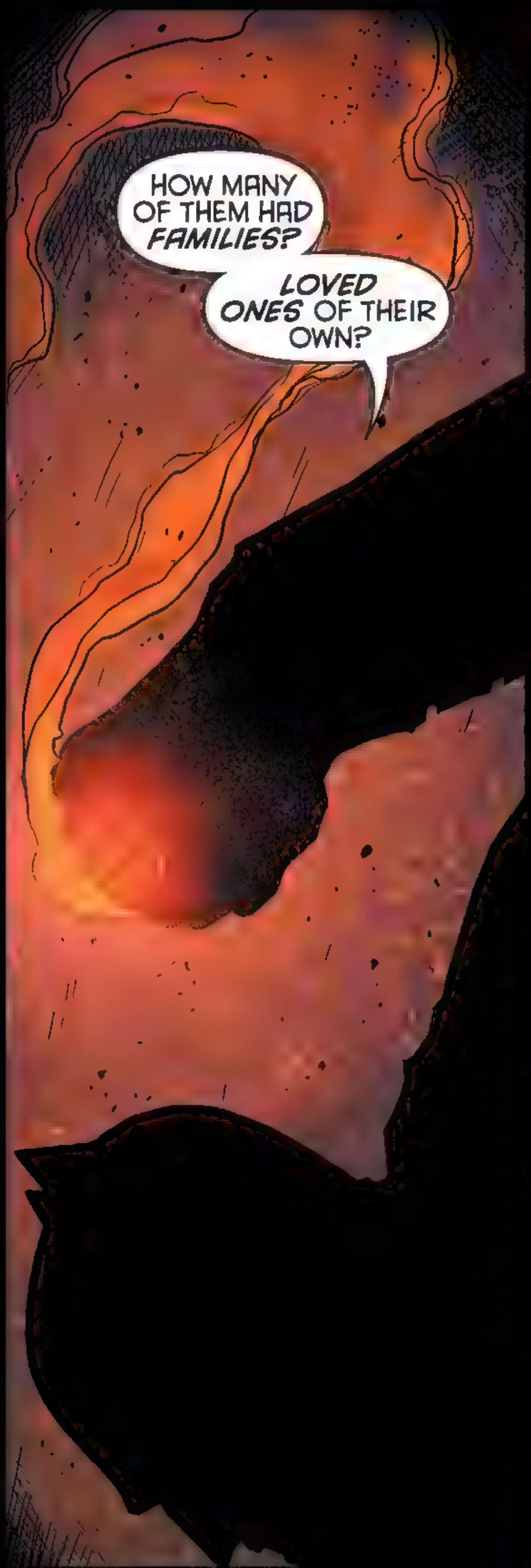


IT'S OVER
VICTOR.



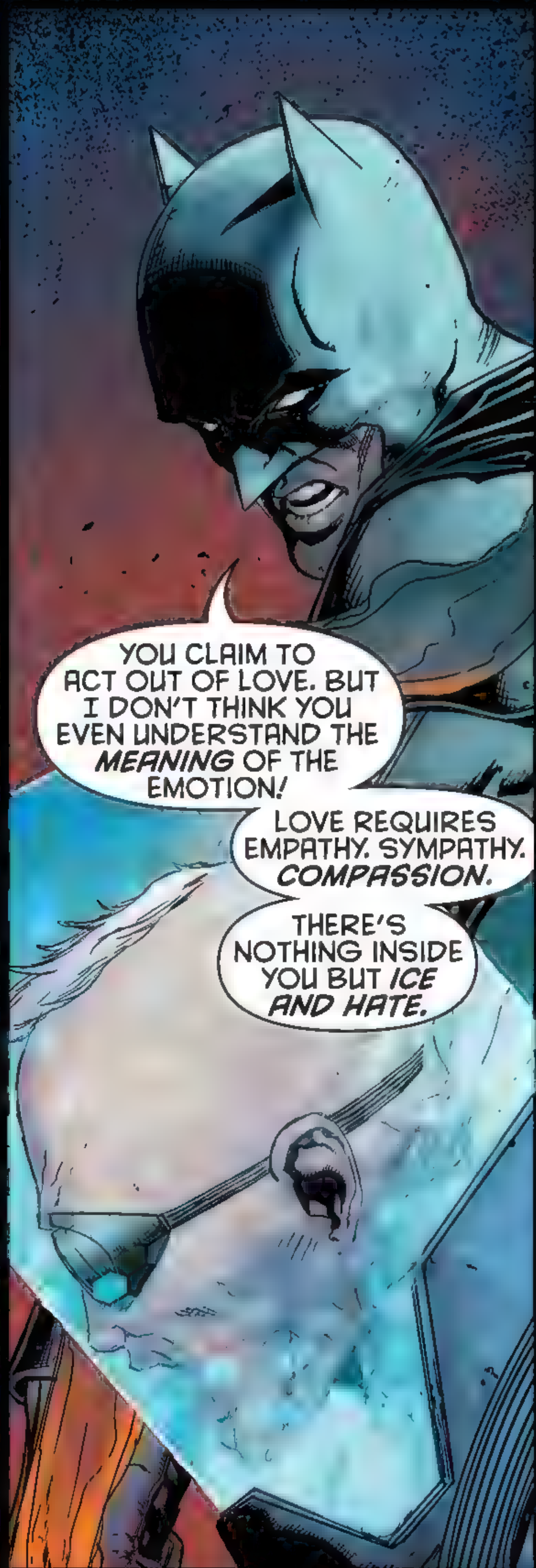


DO YOU KNOW
HOW MANY MEN AND
WOMEN YOU'VE
KILLED TONIGHT,
VICTOR?



HOW MANY
OF THEM HAD
FAMILIES?

LOVED
ONES OF THEIR
OWN?



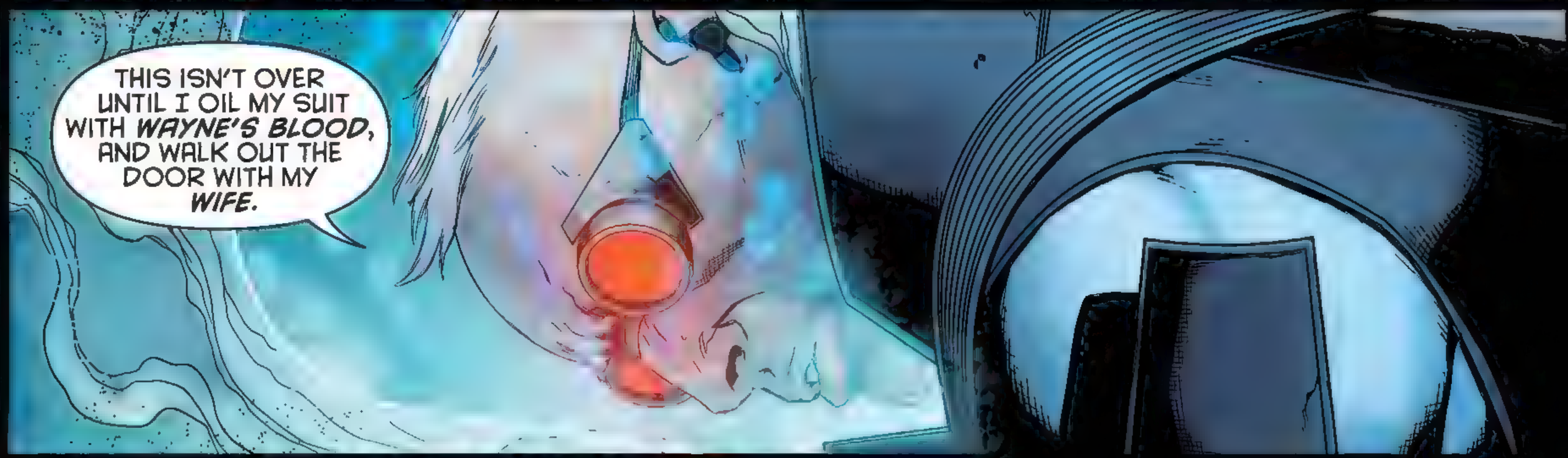
YOU CLAIM TO
ACT OUT OF LOVE. BUT
I DON'T THINK YOU
EVEN UNDERSTAND THE
MEANING OF THE
EMOTION!

LOVE REQUIRES
EMPATHY. SYMPATHY.
COMPASSION.

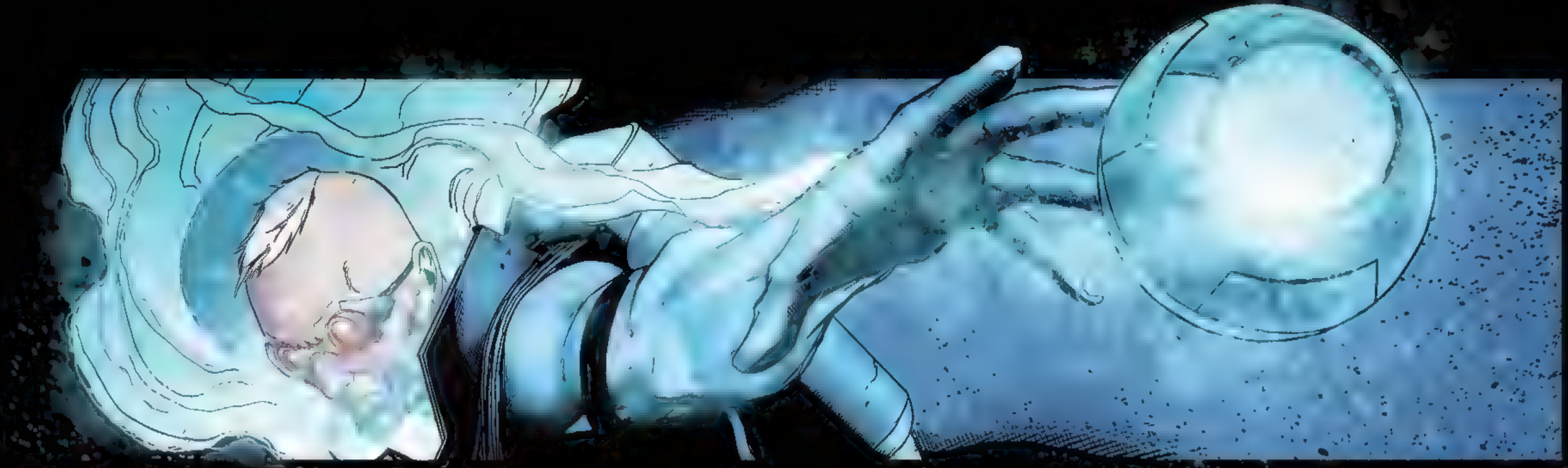
THERE'S
NOTHING INSIDE
YOU BUT **ICE**
AND **HATE.**



IT'S OVER,
VICTOR. YOU'RE
FINISHED.

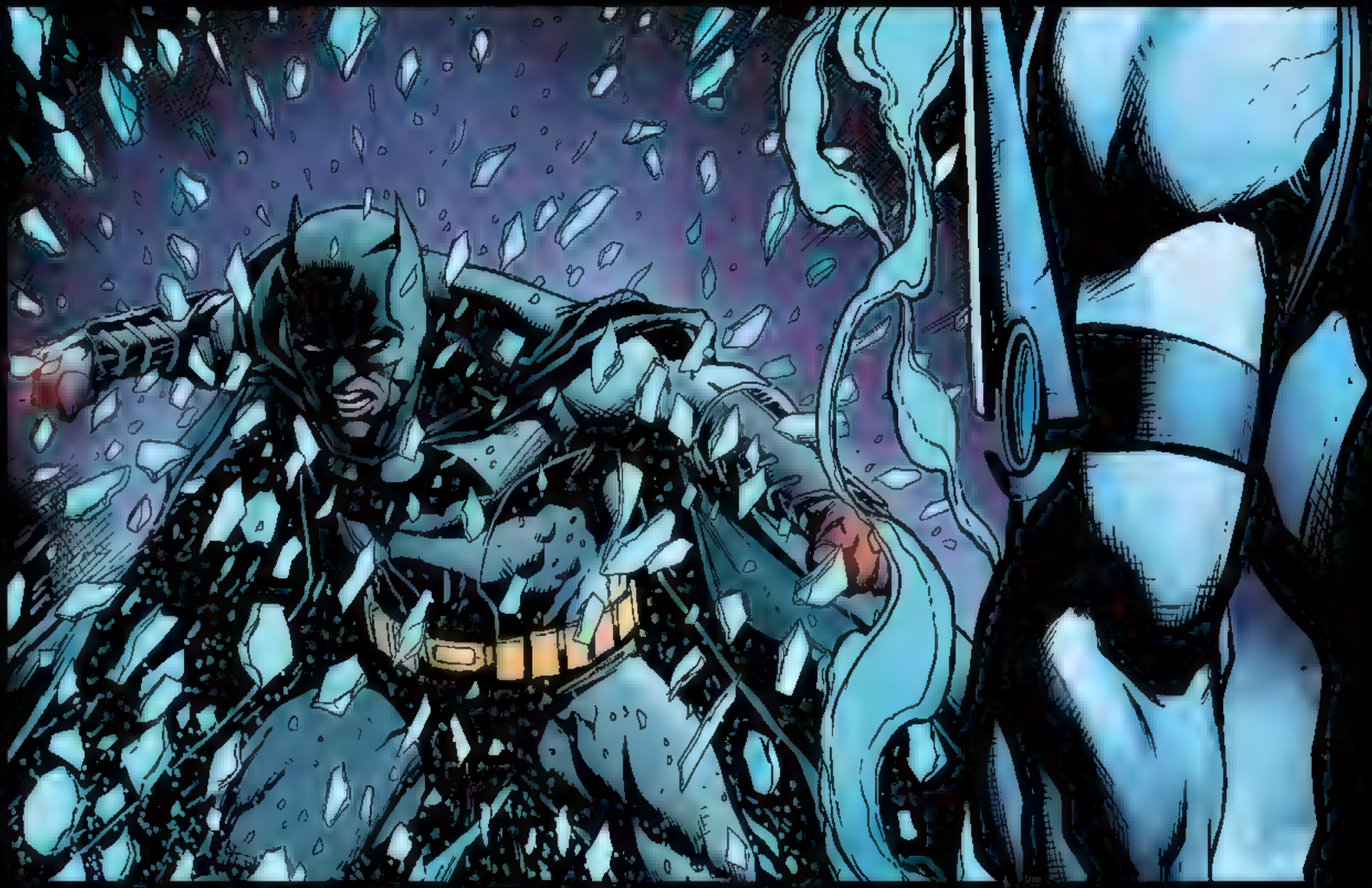


THIS ISN'T OVER
UNTIL I OIL MY SUIT
WITH **WAYNE'S BLOOD,**
AND WALK OUT THE
DOOR WITH MY
WIFE.



MY NORA...I HAVE CREATED THE PERFECT FORMULA, AND THOSE DAMN OWLS EVEN *TESTED* IT FOR US.

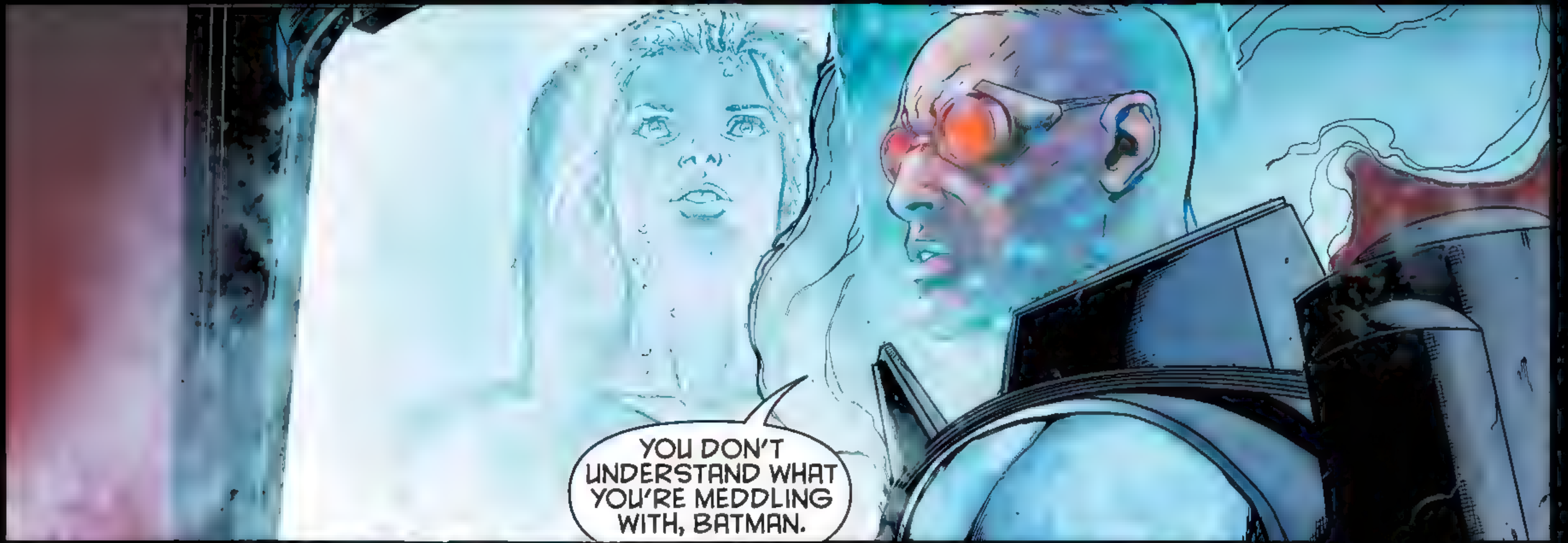
YOU'LL BE IN MY ARMS SOON ENOUGH, AS WE STAND OVER WAYNE'S CORPSE--



MR. WAYNE IS FAR AWAY. SAFE FROM YOU.

SOON NORA WILL BE, TOO.





YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE MEDDLING WITH, BATMAN.



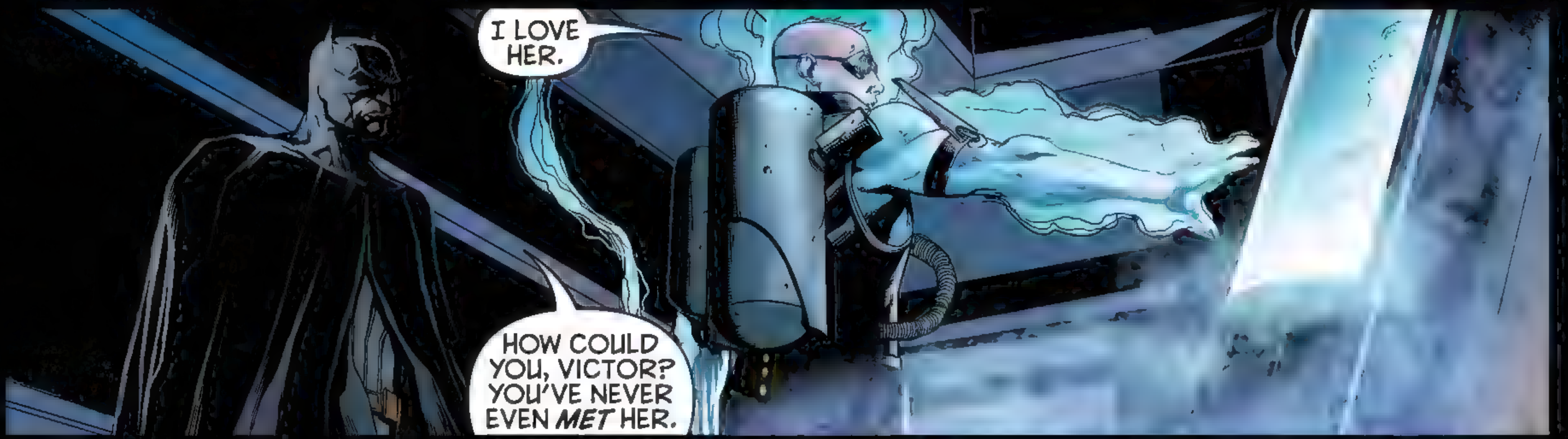
I WILL NOT LET YOU WALK OUT THE DOOR WITH HER.



YOU HAVE *NO RIGHT* TO STAND BETWEEN A MAN AND THE WOMAN HE LOVES!




VICTOR, YOU AND I BOTH KNOW THAT WOMAN IS *NOT* YOUR WIFE.



I LOVE HER.

HOW COULD YOU, VICTOR? YOU'VE NEVER EVEN *MET* HER.




HER NAME WAS *NORA FIELDS*, AND SHE WAS BORN IN 1943.

SHE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH AN INCURABLE HEART CONDITION WHEN SHE WAS TWENTY-THREE YEARS OLD. SHE HAD JUST GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE.




SHE WAS ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED TO A YOUNG LAWYER WHEN IT HAPPENED.

HER FAMILY DECIDED TO PUT HER UNDER A NEW AND CONTROVERSIAL TREATMENT, WHERE ONE DAY SHE MIGHT AWAKEN AND FIND A *NEW LIFE* IN A FUTURE WHERE SHE WOULDN'T HAVE TO DIE AT AGE TWENTY-FIVE.



SHE WAS THE *FIRST* PERSON TO UNDERGO *CRYOGENIC STASIS*, VICTOR. YOU WROTE YOUR DOCTORAL THESIS ON HER OVER A DECADE AGO.

THE CHANCE TO STUDY HER WAS THE ENTIRE REASON YOU CAME TO WORK AT WAYNE INDUSTRIES. SHE'S BEEN IN THIS BUILDING FOR *YEARS*.



"YOU NEVER KNEW HER, AND YET YOU COME BACK, TIME AND TIME AGAIN."

"MR. FREEZE OUT TO SAVE HIS DYING WIFE FROM THE CRUEL BUSINESSMAN WHO TOOK HER AWAY."

"BUT WE BOTH KNOW THAT'S A *FARCE*, VICTOR. SHE'S OLD ENOUGH TO BE YOUR GRANDMOTHER, FOR GOD'S SAKE."



I KNOW HER
BETTER THAN ANYONE,
BATMAN! *I LOVE HER!*
WE ARE MEANT TO BE
TOGETHER!



YOU DON'T
LOVE HER. YOU
NEVER HAVE!

THUNK



YOU'RE JUST A
MADMAN REACHING
OUT FOR THE ILLUSION
OF LOVE IN THE ONLY
THING YOU'VE EVER
CARED ABOUT...



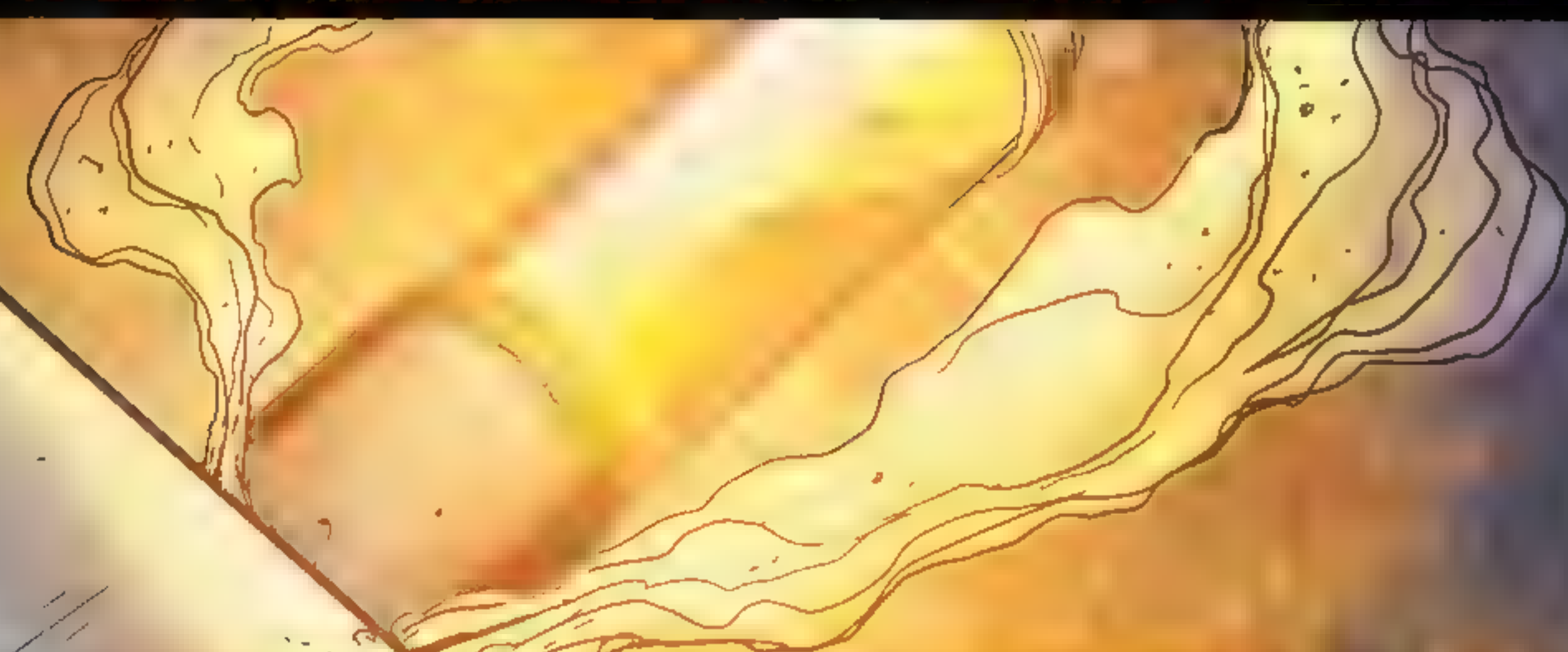
...THE *COLD*.

YOU LOVE THE
COLD, VICTOR. EVEN
IF YOU DID BRING HER
BACK, YOU'D END UP
DESTROYING
HER.

BECAUSE YOU
LOVE AN IDEA, VICTOR.
AN *OBSESSION*. AND
THAT I *DO* UNDER-
STAND.

BUT IT'S OVER. YOUR SUIT'S
BEING OVERLOADED WITH
YOUR *PERFECT*
FORMULA.

THE COMPOUND
YOU HOPED TO RAISE NORA
WITH, JUST LIKE THE COURT
OF OWLS RAISED ITS
LEGION OF *TALONS*.



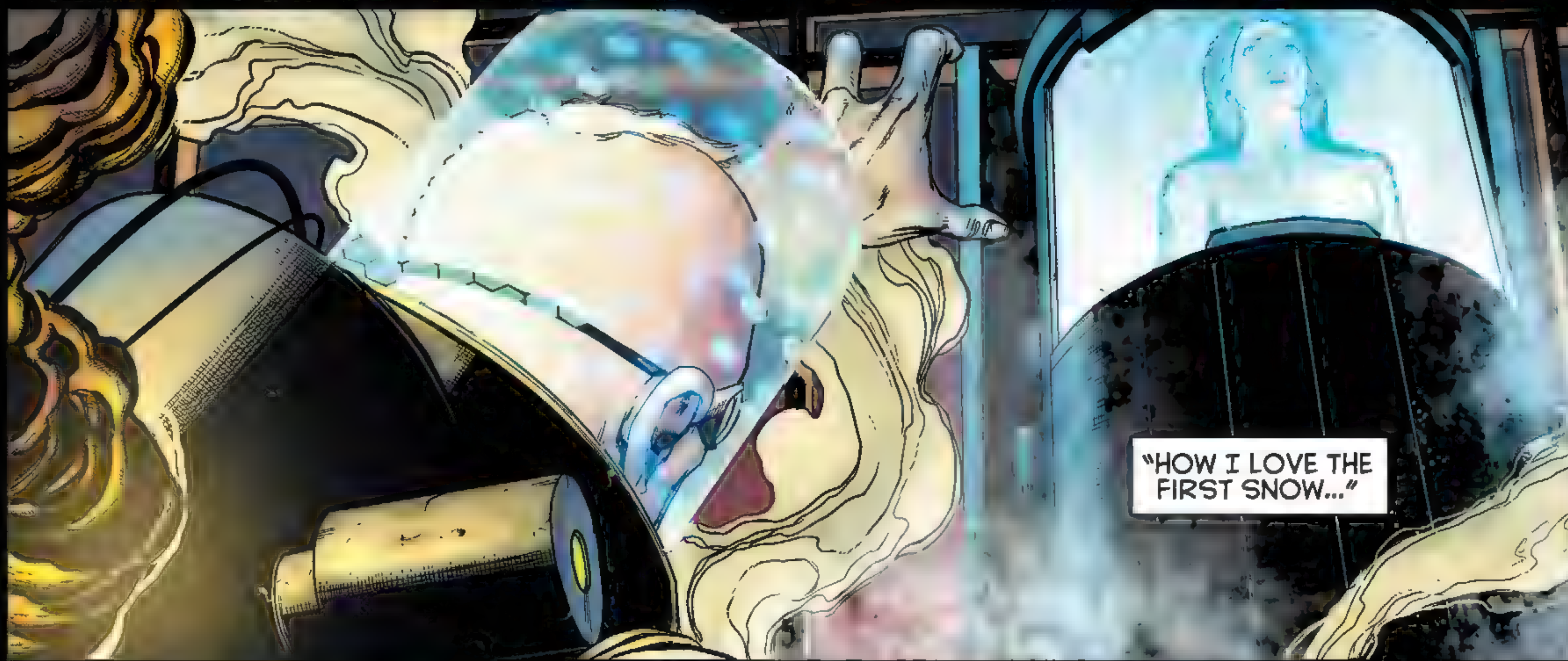


YOUR
CORE BODY
TEMPERATURE'S
RISING RAPIDLY. I
THINK YOU'LL FIND
IT VERY HARD TO
MOVE RIGHT
NOW.



NIGHTWING.
FREEZE IS
DOWN.

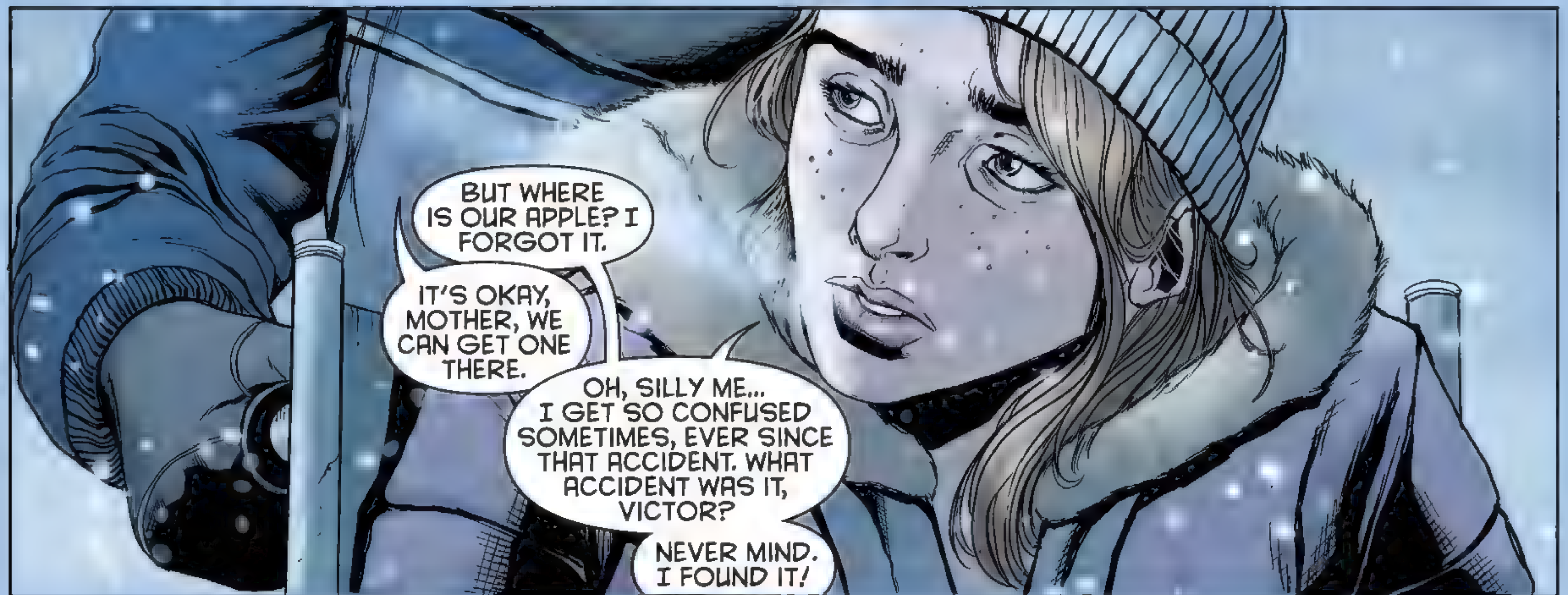
GET THE
BATMOBILE,
AND WE'LL TAKE
HIM BACK TO
ARKHAM.

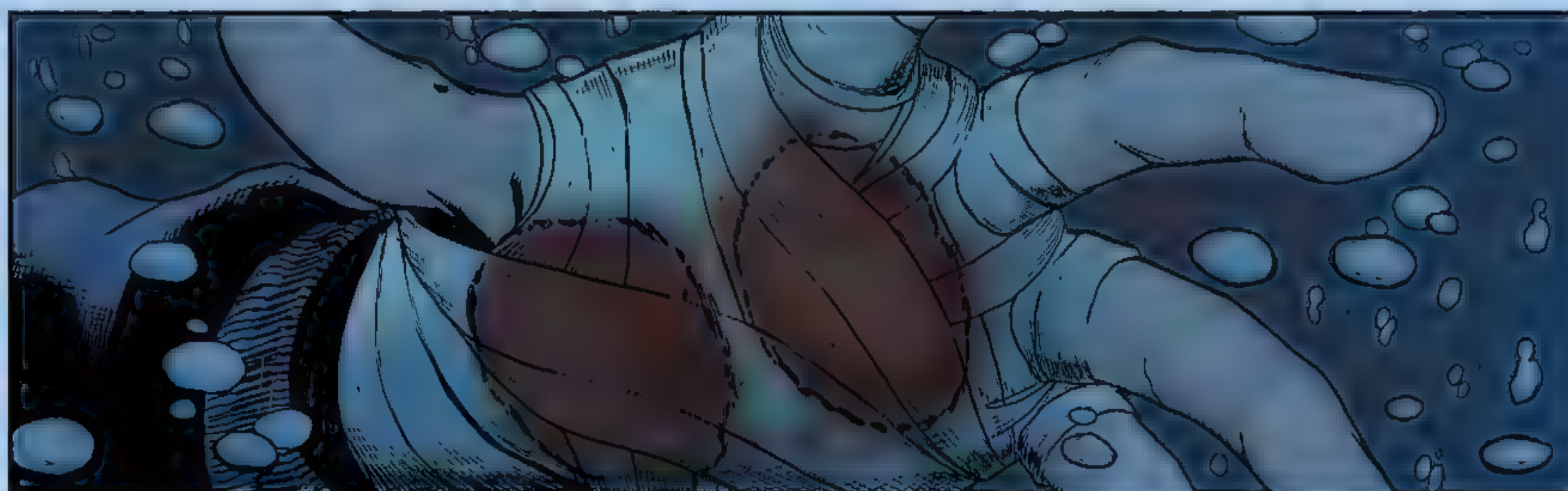
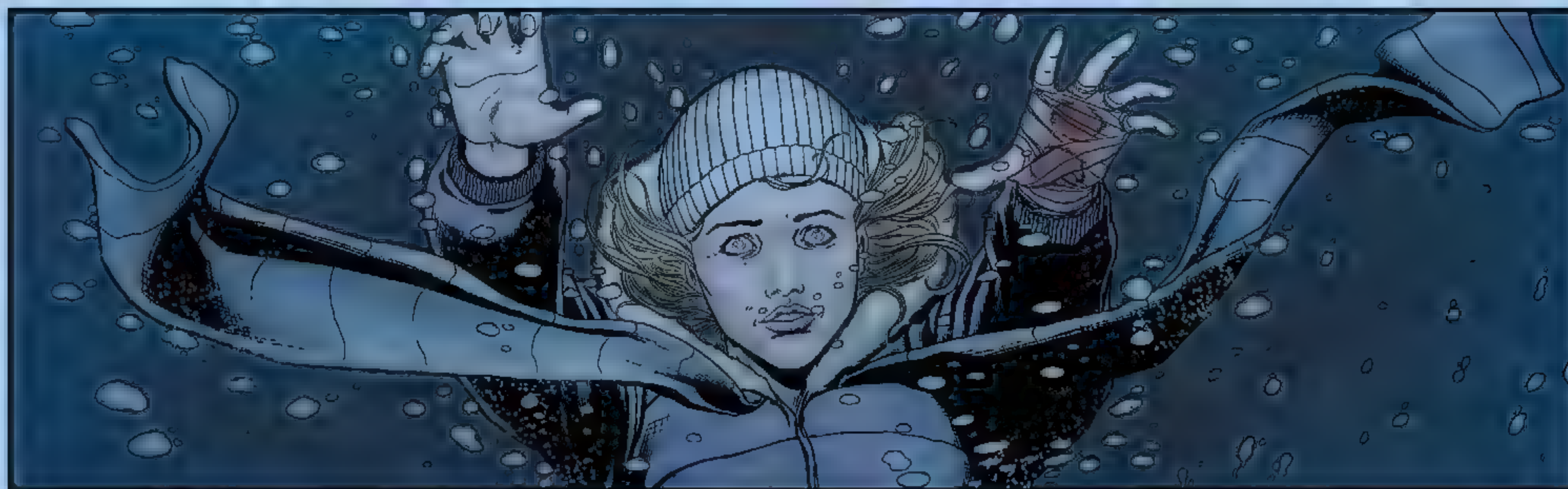
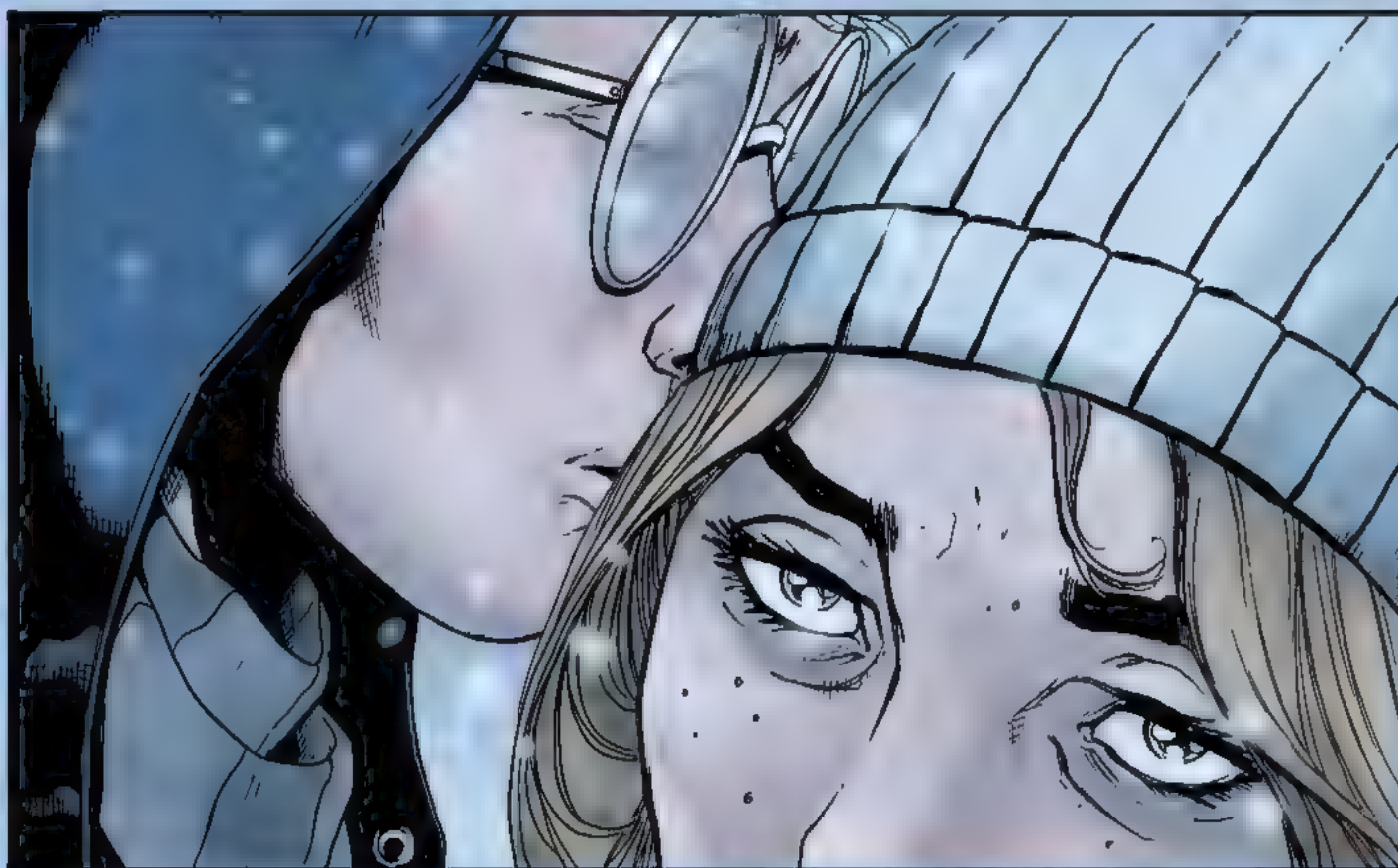
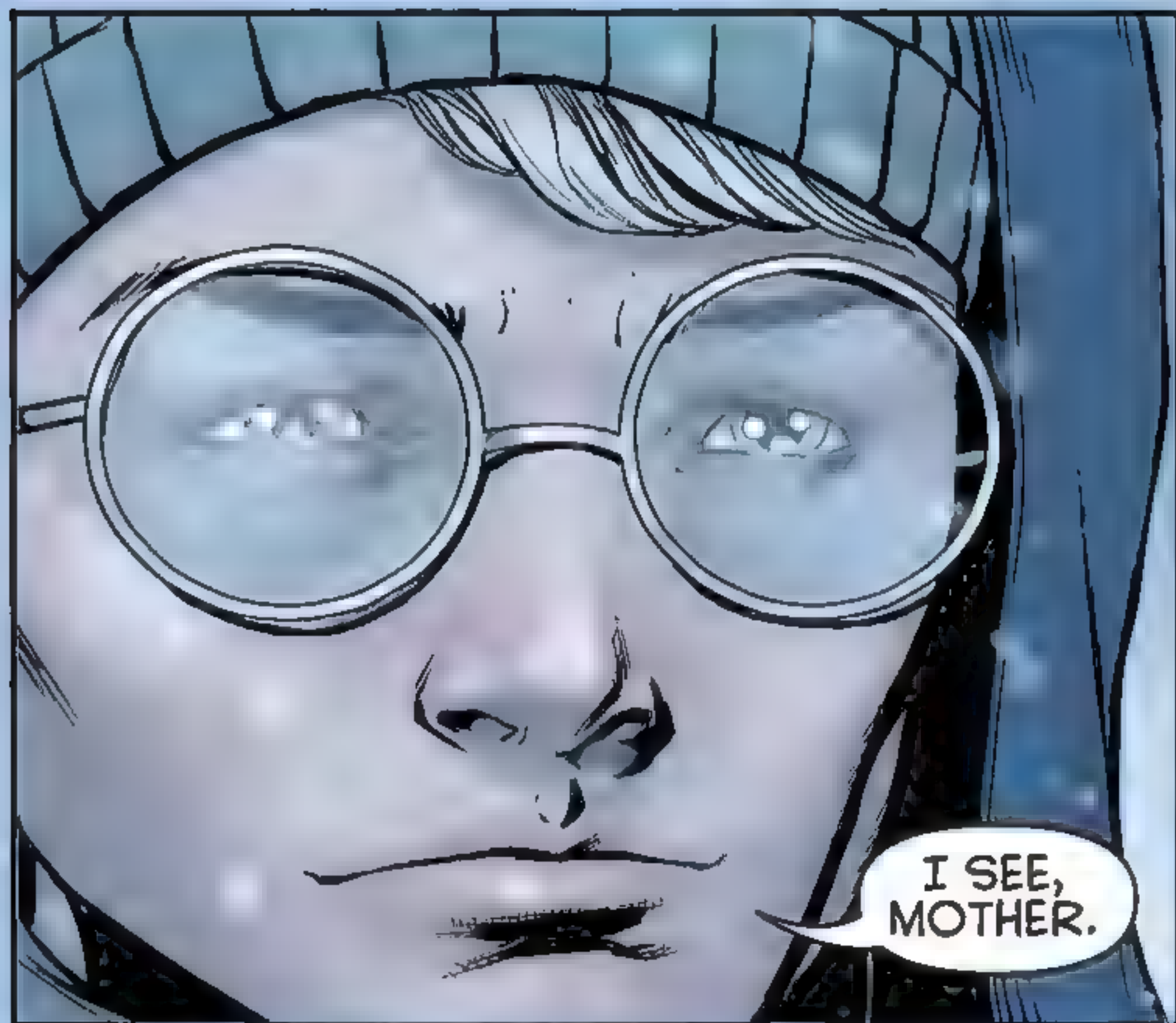
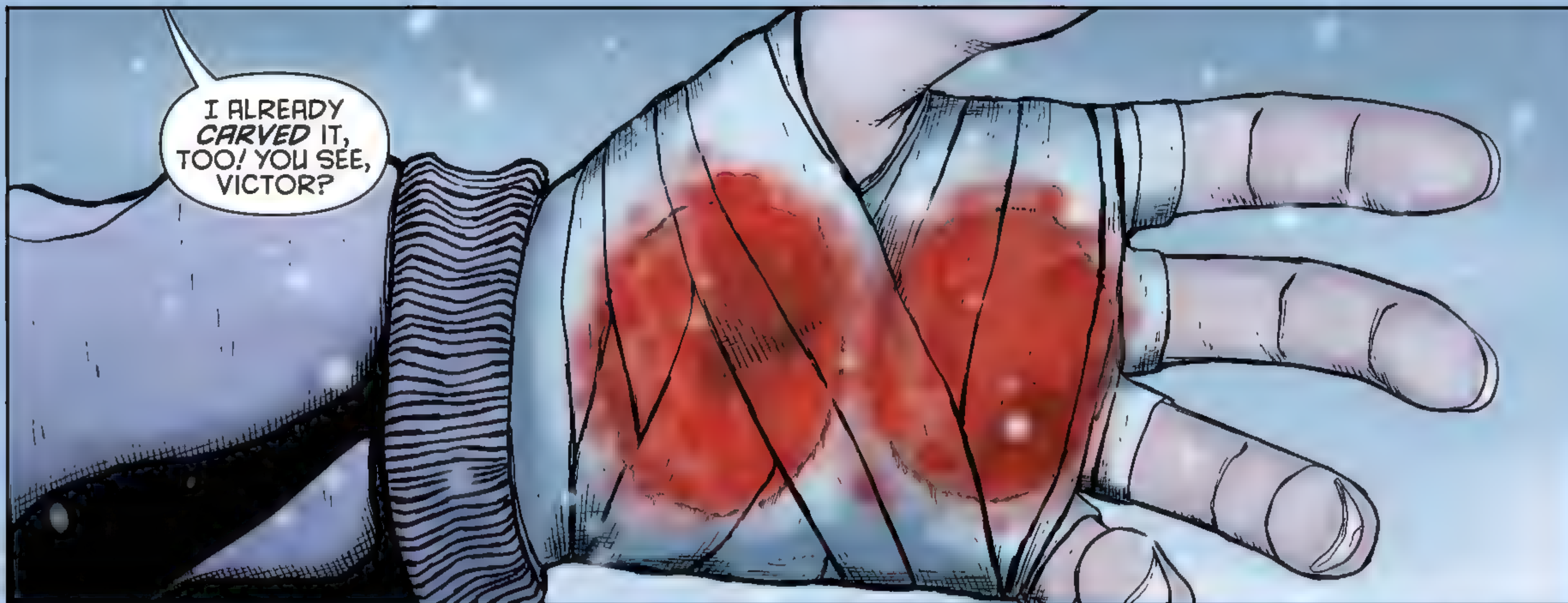


"HOW I LOVE THE
FIRST SNOW..."



"...UNBROKEN
AND WHITE..."







GOTHAM, 1665.

"HE HAS FAILED
THE COURT OF
OWLS."

"HOW SO? HAS
THE TALON NOT
COMPLETED HIS
TASK?"

"NO. HE
FOUND HIS
PREY..."

"...BUT THERE WERE
COMPLICATIONS."

"IS HIS QUARRY
DEAD OR DOES HE
STILL BREATHE?"

"NO. HIS
CURSED SOUL
HAS LEFT THIS
EARTH."

"BUT, AS THE TALE HAS BEEN TOLD, THE TALON
FOUND THE MAN DRESSING FOR BED, AND
THE TARGET BEGGED FOR MERCY."

"THE TALON FELT IT 'LACKED
HONOR' TO CUT HIM DOWN IN
THIS MANNER. SO, HE ARMED
THIS WHELP WITH A *DAGGER*,
AND INSTRUCTED HIM TO
BATTLE FOR HIS LIFE."

"BUT THE CRAVEN
SIMPLY RAN INTO
THE STREETS
BELLOWING."

"AND THE
TALON WAS
SEEN."

"IN ALL, HE WAS FORCED
TO MURDER TEN
BRITISH SOLDIERS.
ONE WAS AN OFFICER."

"THERE WILL BE
QUESTIONS.
THERE WILL BE
INQUIRIES."

"AND HE LOST ONE
OF HIS SACRED
BLADES."



NIGHT OF THE OWLS

"Mirrors Come In All Sizes."

Written by Judd Winick
Art by Guillem March
Colors by Tomeu Morey
Letters by Carlos M. Mangual

"AND THIS IS *NOT* THE FIRST TIME THAT HE HAS PROVEN UNRELIABLE DUE TO SOME *MISGUIDED* ATTEMPT AT *HONOR*."



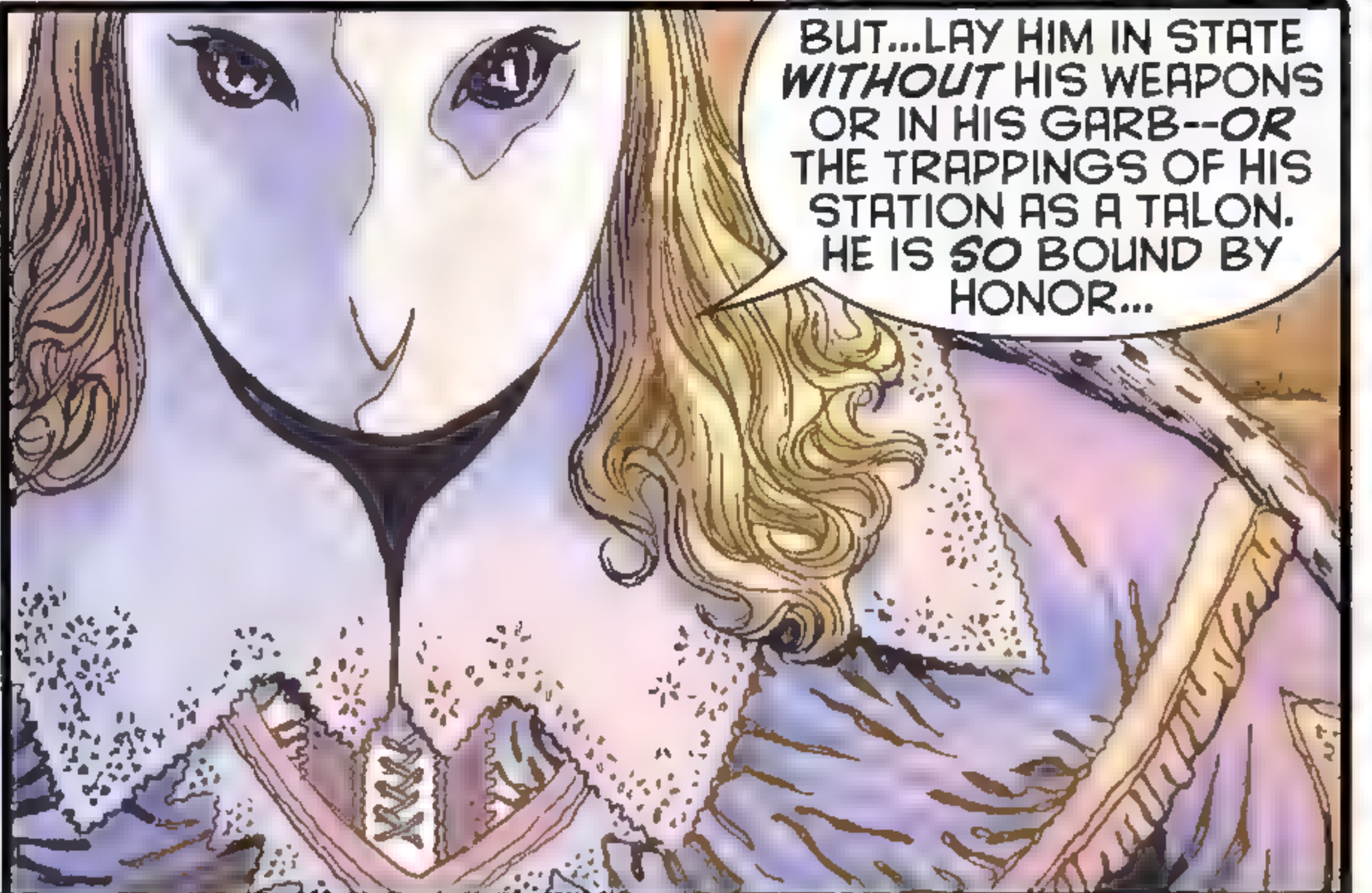
HE HAS NOT PERFORMED AS WELL AS HIS PREDECESSOR. TOO DAMNED *EMOTIONAL*. OUR METHODS IN *BUILDING* THESE MEN INTO THE WEAPONS WE DESIRE THEM TO BE...MAY NOT BE *PERFECTED*.

OUR *NEXT* TALON IS NOT QUITE OF AGE, BUT HE IS *MORE* THAN READY. HIS BLOOD RUNS AS *COLD* AS THE *ICE FLOES*.

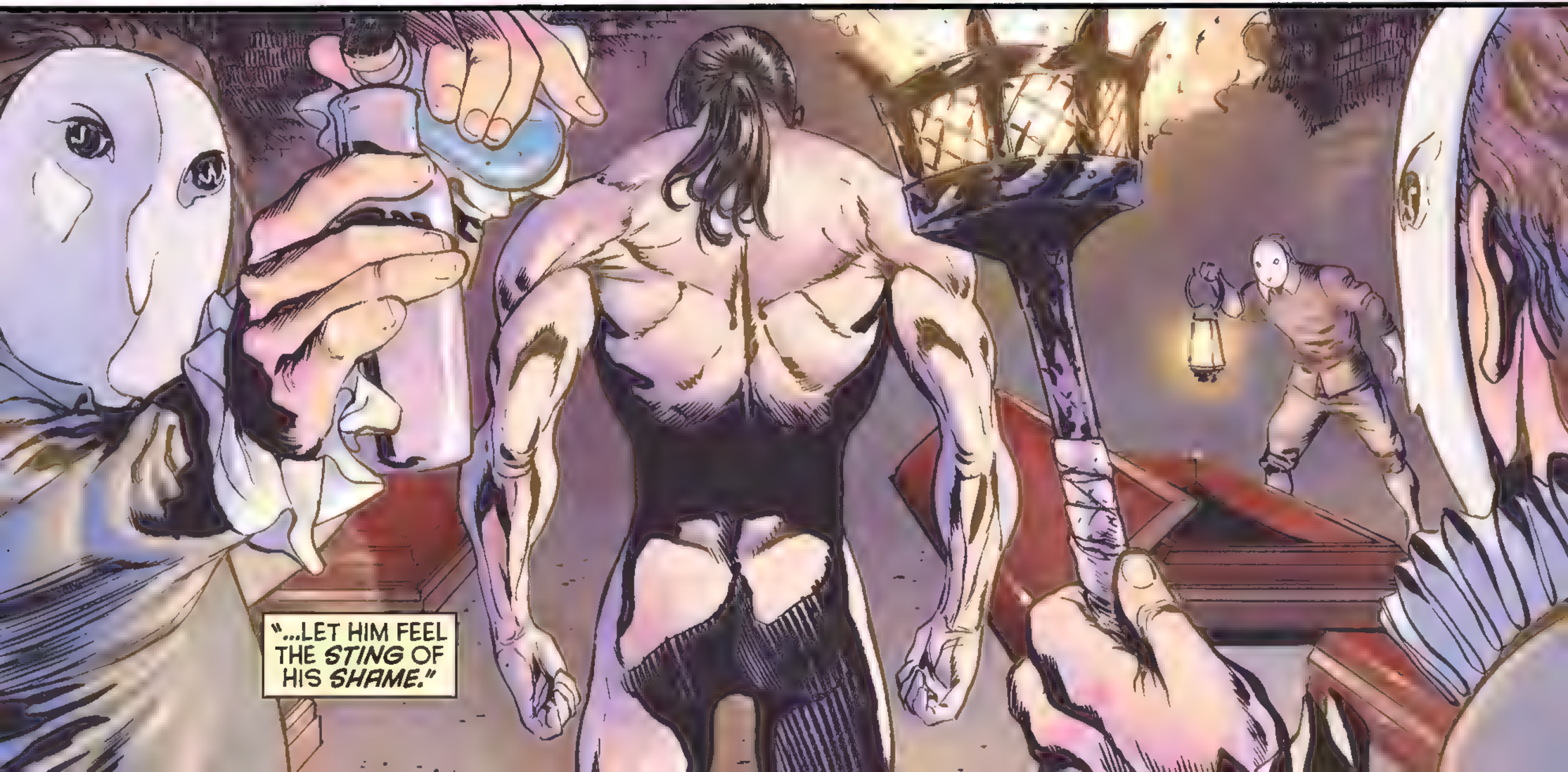


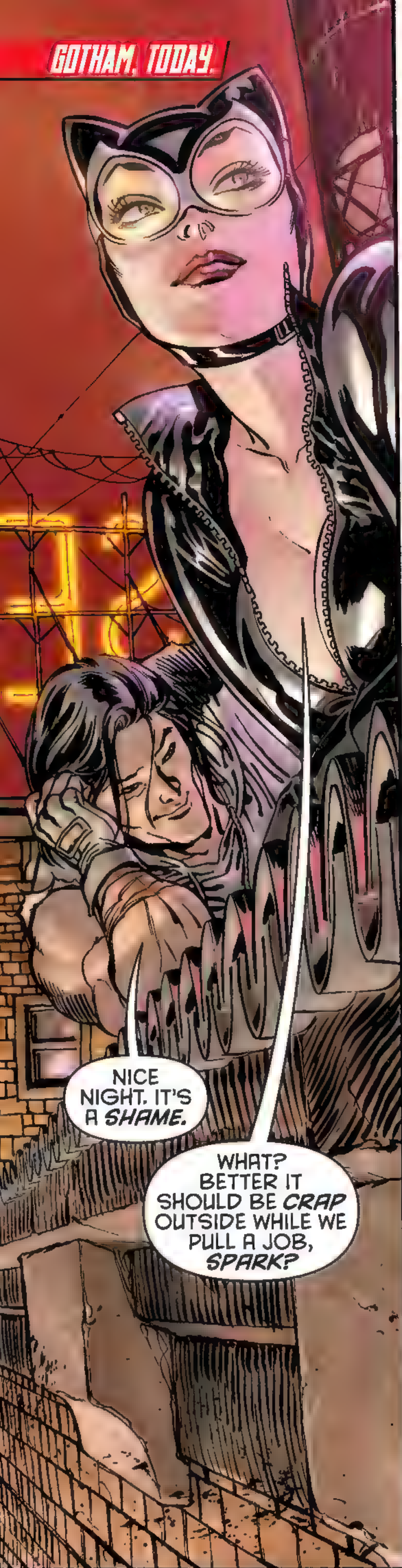
AYE, THEN I SUGGEST THAT WE "*RETIRE*" *EPHRAIM NEWHOUSE*. PREPARE THE ALCHEMY FOR HIS SLEEP.

BUT...LAY HIM IN STATE *WITHOUT* HIS WEAPONS OR IN HIS GARB--OR THE TRAPPINGS OF HIS STATION AS A TALON. HE IS *SO* BOUND BY *HONOR*...



"...LET HIM FEEL THE *STING* OF HIS *SHAME*."





NICE NIGHT. IT'S A SHAME.

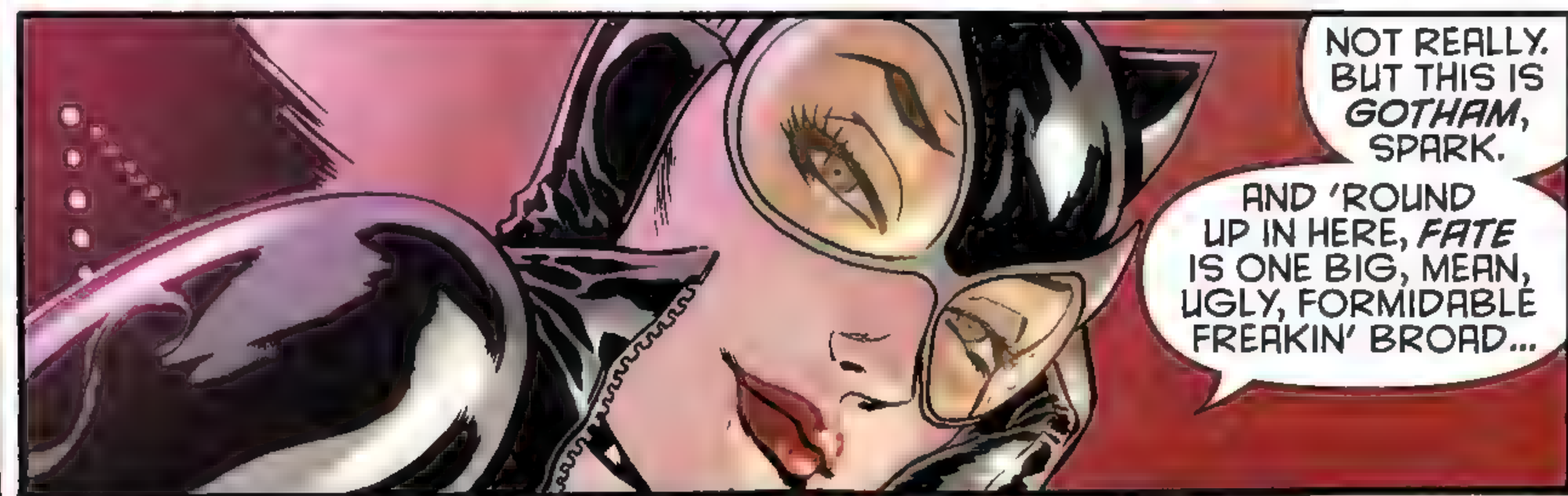
WHAT? BETTER IT SHOULD BE *CRAP* OUTSIDE WHILE WE PULL A JOB, SPARK?



NO. I MEANT THAT SPENDING A BEAUTIFUL, UNSEASONABLY *WARM* EVENING WAITING FOR *PENGUIN* TO LEAVE HIS BROWNSTONE SO WE COULD ROB HIM SEEMS LIKE A WASTE OF GOOD WEATHER.

REALLY? SEEMS LIKE A PERFECTLY *FINE* NIGHT TO STEAL A THREE-HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD KNIFE WITH AN *OWL HEAD* ON IT, SO--DON'T *JINX* US. YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE IT RAIN. OR WORSE.

YOU'RE SUPERSTITIOUS?



NOT REALLY. BUT THIS IS *GOTHAM*, SPARK.

AND 'ROUND UP IN HERE, *FATE* IS ONE BIG, MEAN, UGLY, FORMIDABLE FREAKIN' BROAD...

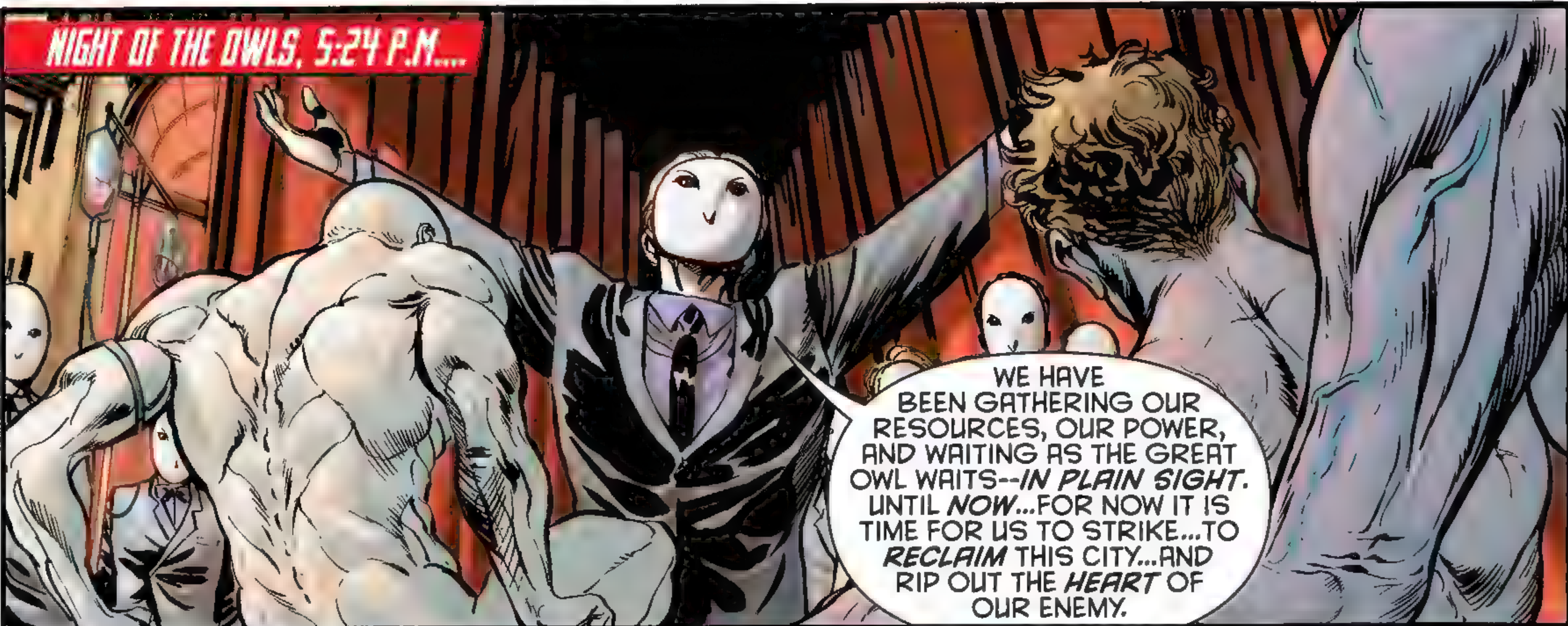
"...AND IT'S BEST NOT SCREW WITH HER."



YOU HAVE TRAVELED SO FAR, FROM THE BANKS OF THE *RIVER LETHE*, THE RIVER OF MINDLESSNESS, WHERE THE SHADES WALK, BACK TO THIS WORLD, TO YOUR CITY. *GOTHAM*.

YES, LOOK. LOOK AT YOUR BODY. IT HAS BEEN RESTORED, AND MADE STRONGER THAN BEFORE.

NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 5:24 P.M....



WE HAVE BEEN GATHERING OUR RESOURCES, OUR POWER, AND WAITING AS THE GREAT OWL WAITS--IN PLAIN SIGHT. UNTIL NOW...FOR NOW IT IS TIME FOR US TO STRIKE...TO RECLAIM THIS CITY...AND RIP OUT THE HEART OF OUR ENEMY.



I AM DISGRACED. I AM INCOMPLETE.

"DISGRACED"?

THERE'S SOME DOCUMENTATION ABOUT THAT ON THIS ONE. EPHRAIM NEWHOUSE. MORE "DUTY-BOUND" THAN NEEDED.



BUT HE WILL SERVE HIS PURPOSE.

YOU WILL BE BESTOWED WITH THE UNIFORM OF YOUR SERVICE AND STATION.

YOU ARE A TALON. COMPLETE THAT WHICH YOUR COURT ASKS OF YOU.

THIS ONE IS A BLIGHT UPON THE CITY. A SELF-APPOINTED CZAR OF THE SCUM THAT FUELS THE BODY OF GOTHAM.

REMOVE HIM...



...AND YOUR HONOR WILL BE RESTORED.



NIGHT OF THE OWLS, 2:03 A.M.

THERE'S OUR FAVORITE FOWL ON THE MOVE.

COOL.

SHOWTIME.

LET'S VISIT HIS EMPTY NEST.

DAMN IT TO HELL. IDIOTIC RUSSIANS. LATE EVERY DAMNED TIME. SIMPLY A CABAL OF SLACK-JAWED, COLD WAR NEANDERTHALS!


YOU COULD HAVE TAKEN THE CALL FROM THE CAR, MR. COBBLEPOT.

YES, BECAUSE I RELISH PROVIDING EVIDENCE TO FEDERAL AGENCIES BY HAVING A TETE-A-TETE ON A CELLULAR TELEPHONE!

HERE AT THIS DOMICILE, THE LINES ARE ROUTED, SCRAMBLED, AND REFRIED LIKE BEANS.



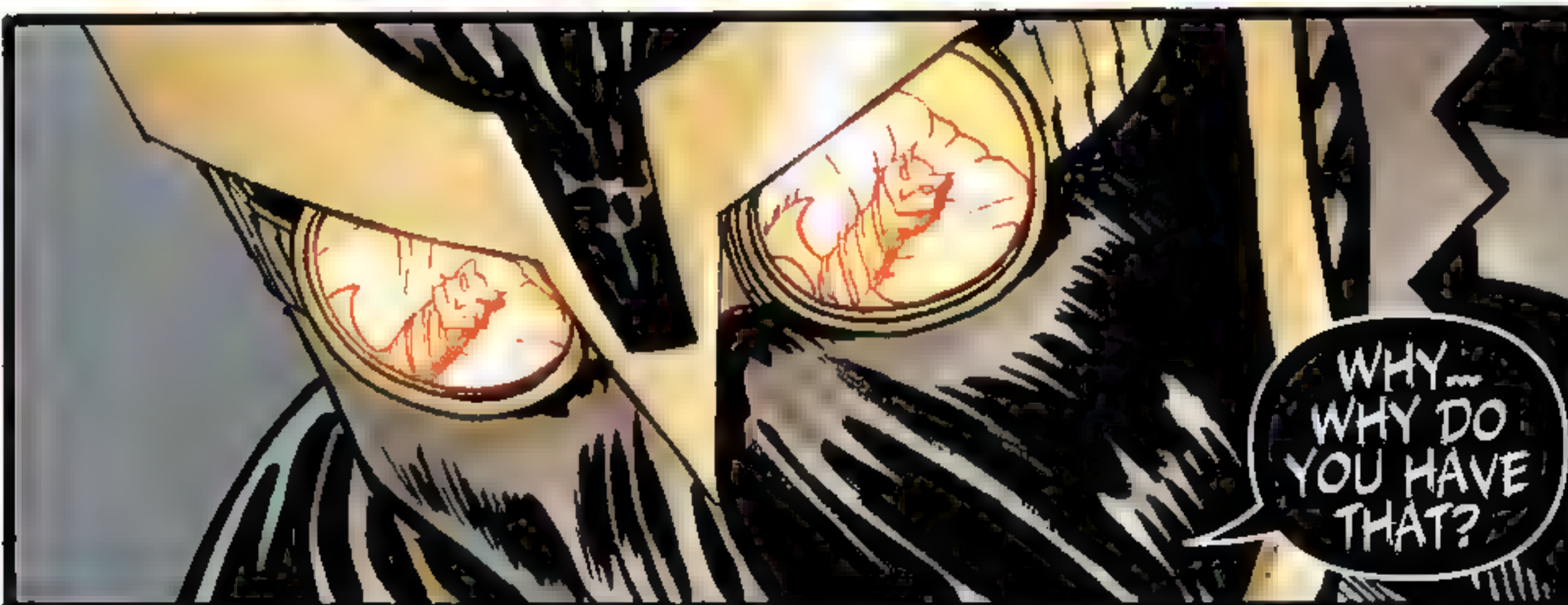
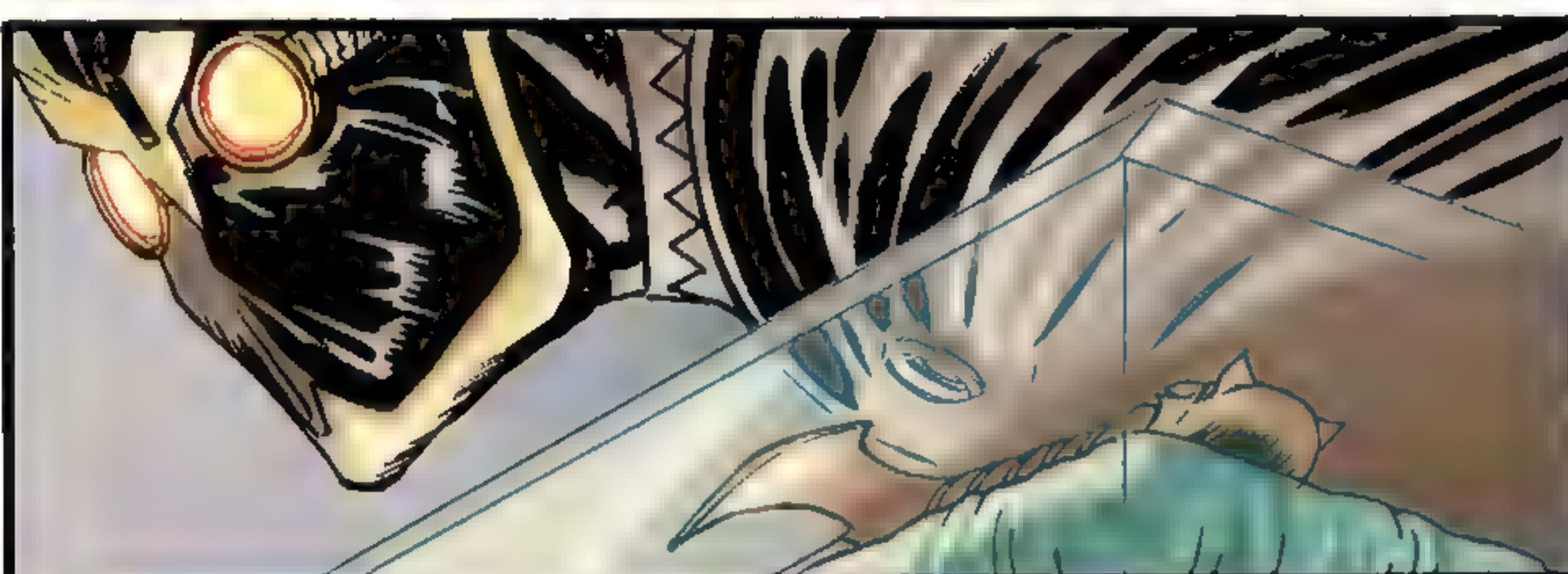




WHAT IS THIS--?/ WHO
IS YOUR EMPLOYER?/
WHATEVER THEY ARE
PAYING YOU--IT'S NOT
A *TENTH* OF WHAT I
CAN GIVE YOU--

I HAVE
NEED OF
NOTHING.

EXCEPT
YOUR LIFE.



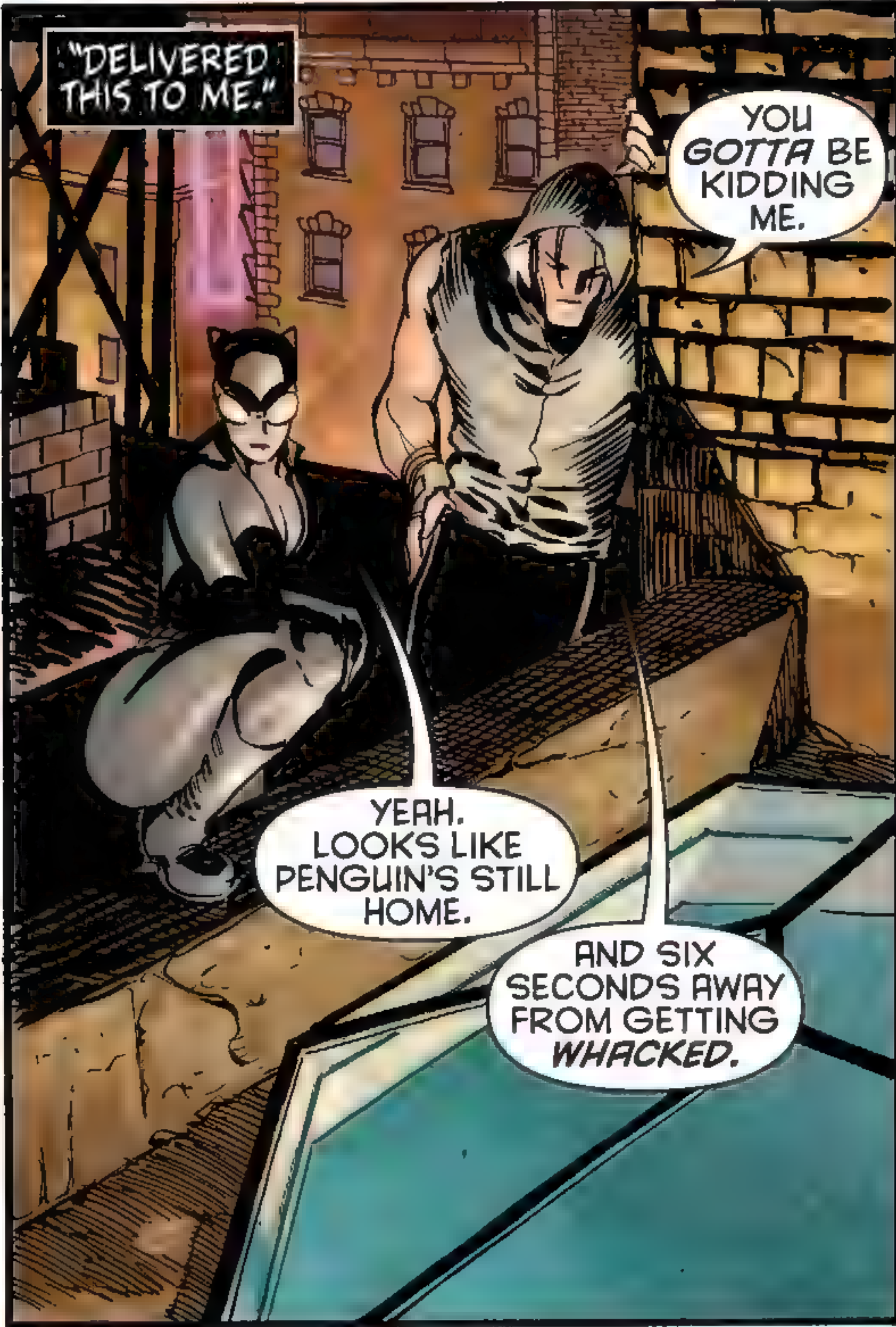


THE
DAGGER?
I...

...I JUST
COLLECT *BIRD*
ANTIQUITIES. DO
YOU...DO YOU *WANT*
IT? TAKE IT. YOU CAN
HAVE EVERYTHING
IN THE ROOM IF
YOU--



IT IS FATE THAT
HAS BROUGHT ME
HERE. BROUGHT
ME BACK.

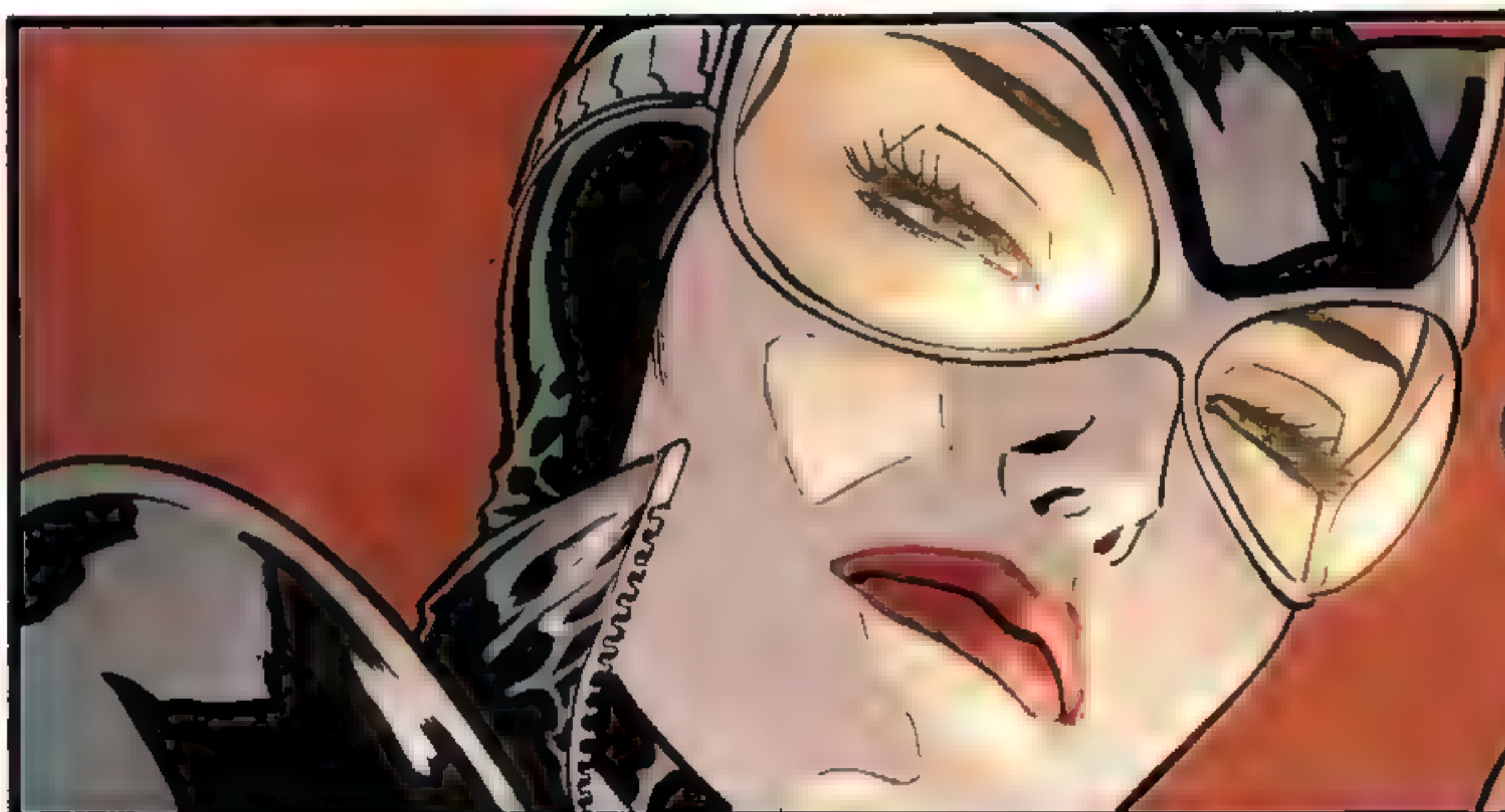


"DELIVERED
THIS TO ME."

YOU
GOTTA BE
KIDDING
ME.

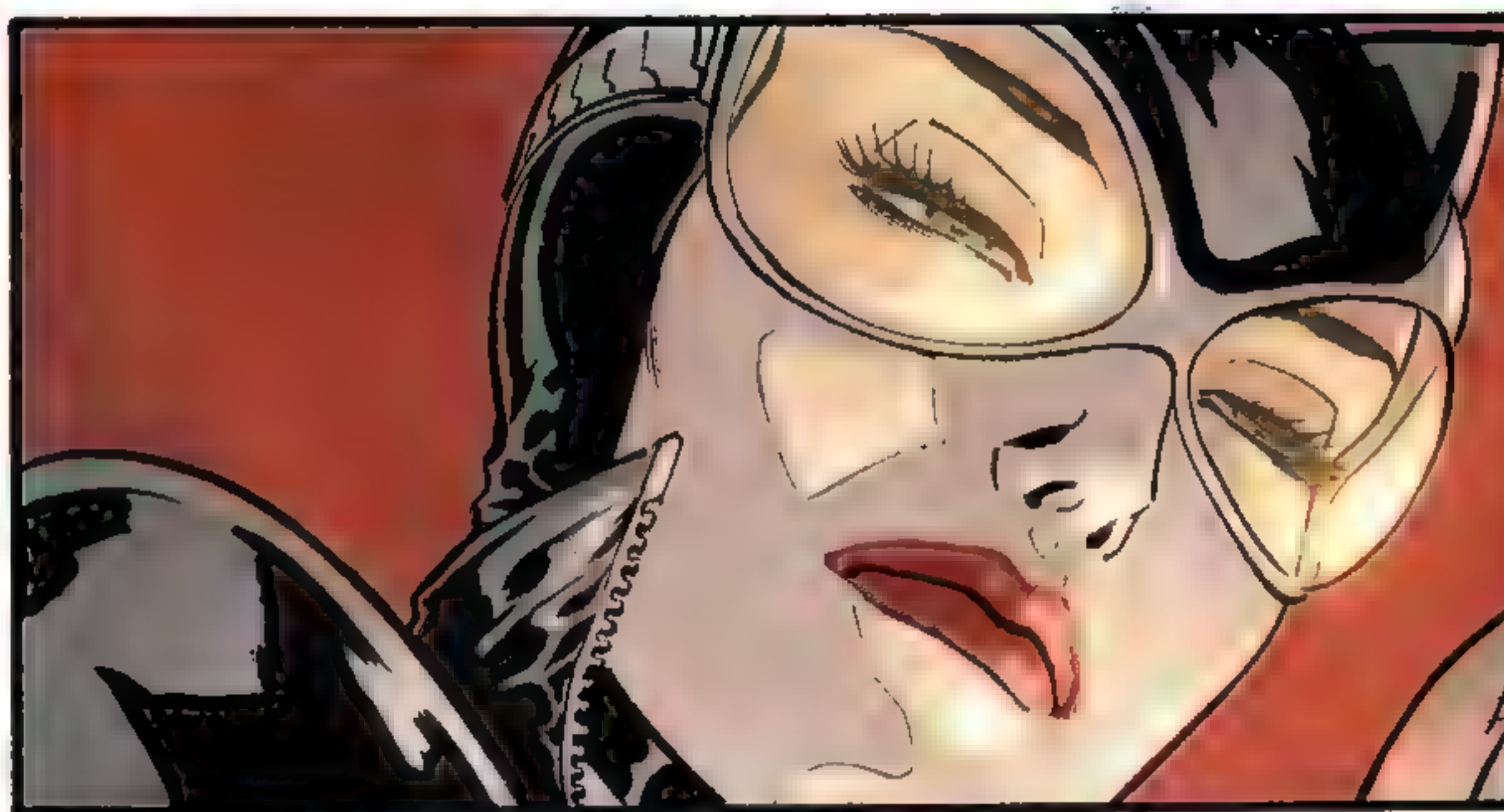
YEAH.
LOOKS LIKE
PENGUIN'S STILL
HOME.

AND SIX
SECONDS AWAY
FROM GETTING
WHACKED.



LET'S
GO. IT'S
SCREWED.

YEAH.

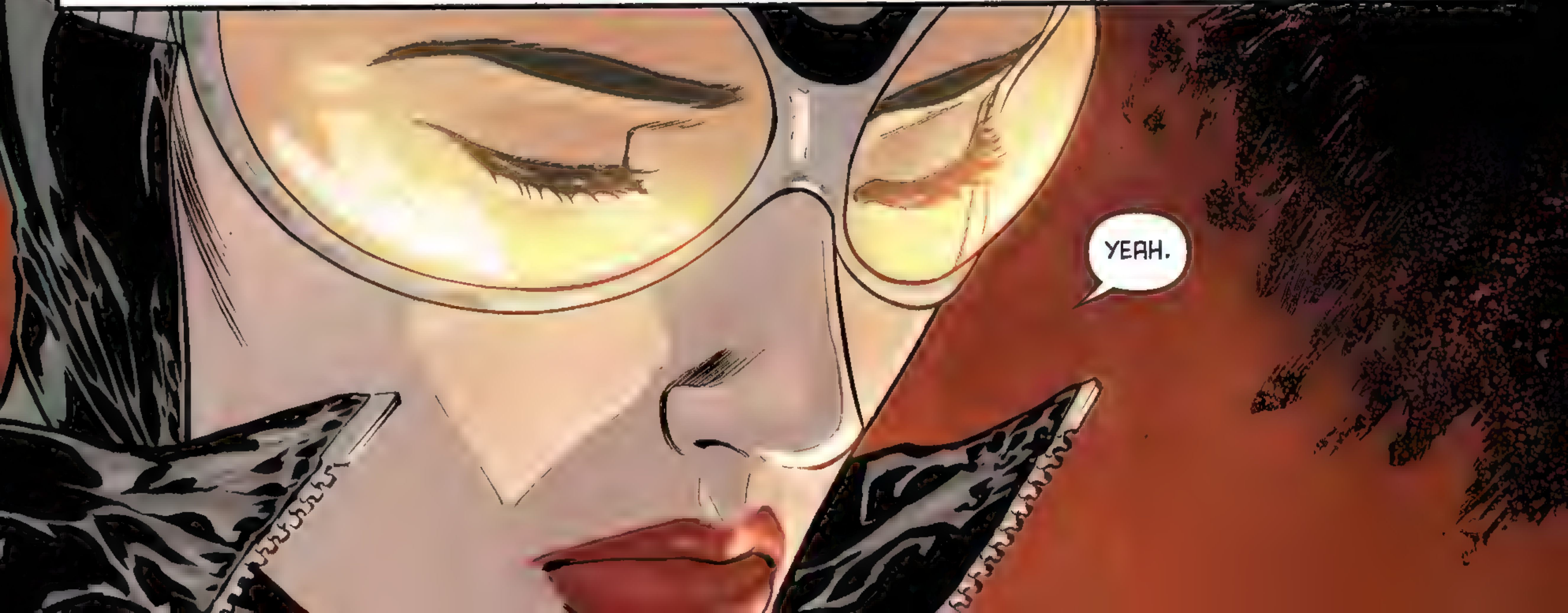


CATWOMAN?

YEAH?



LET'S.
GO.



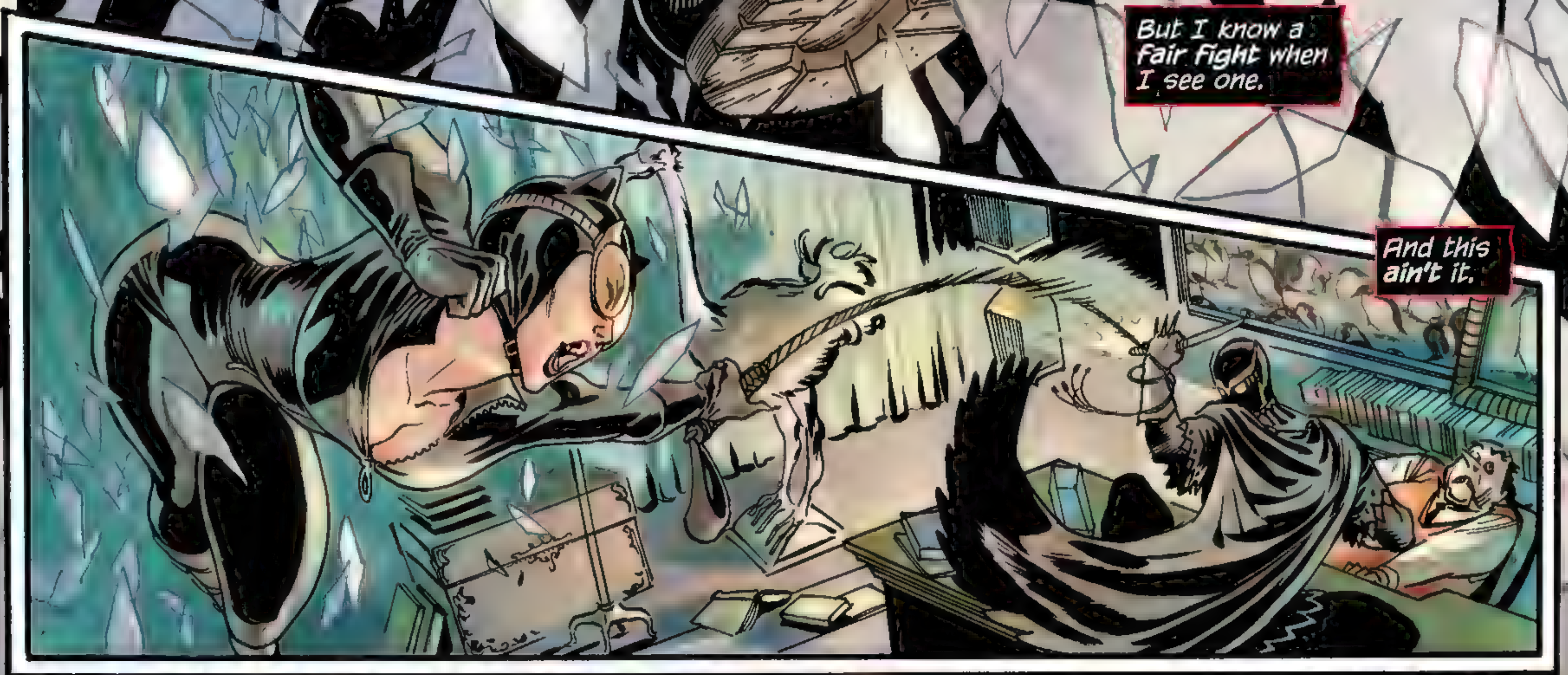
YEAH.

*I don't always have
the best judgment.
I don't always make
the right move.*



*But I know a
fair fight when
I see one.*

*And this
ain't it.*



And Gotham's favorite fat little gangster with a birdie fetish might deserve to get iced.

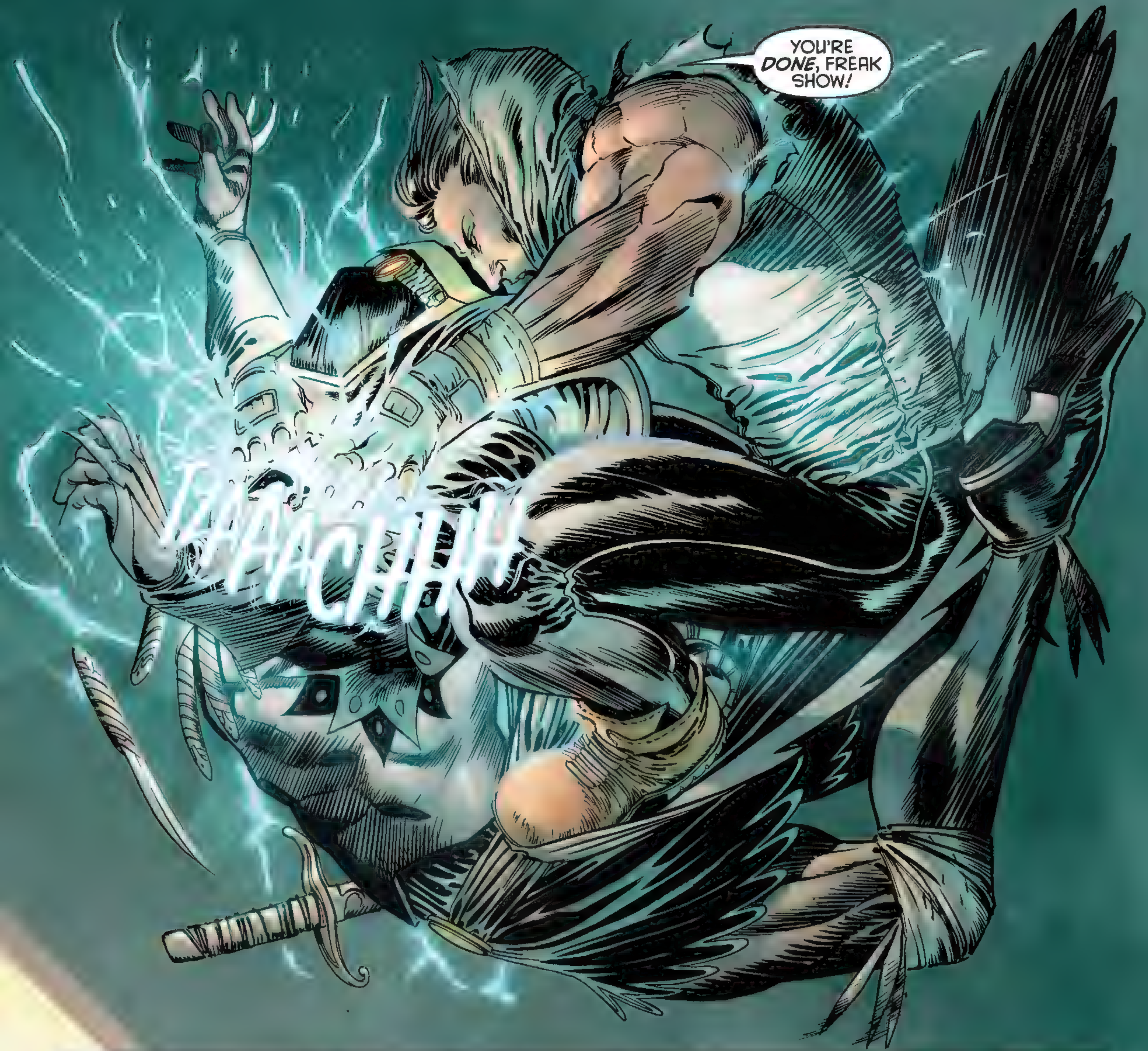
But I can't just watch it happen.



Then again, I may not be in any position to stop it.

CRAP.





YOU'RE
DONE, FREAK
SHOW!

WAAACHHHH



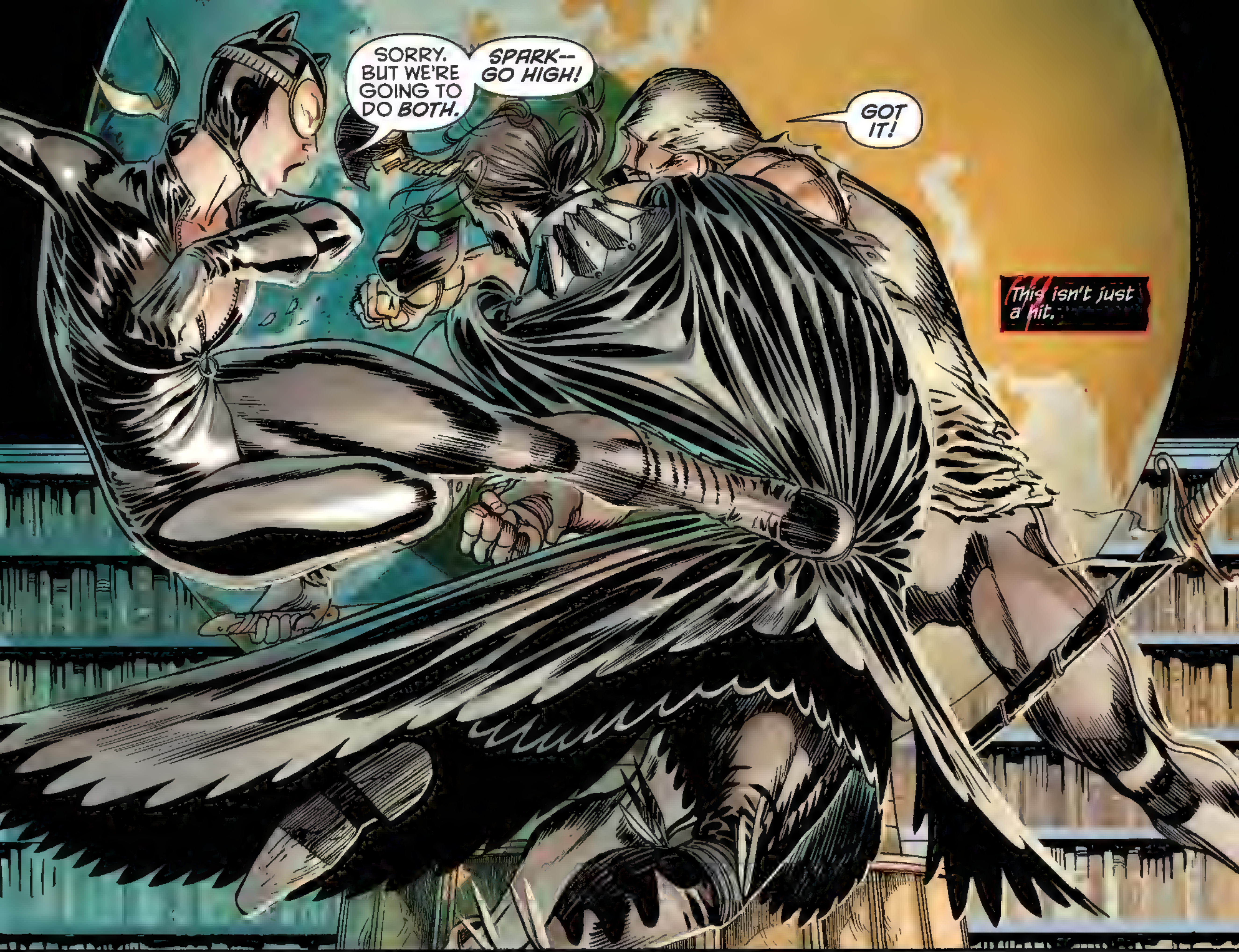
C'MON! GRAB
THE KNIFE! IT ALL
WENT A *WHOLE*
LOT MESSIER BUT
WE STILL--



--SCORED.

YOU WILL
NOT
INTERFERE.

NOR TAKE
WHAT IS NOT
YOURS.



SORRY.
BUT WE'RE
GOING TO
DO BOTH.

SPARK--
GO HIGH!

GOT
IT!

This isn't just
a hit.



And this guy isn't
just a hitter.



DAMN
IT.

THAT'S...
THAT'S NOT
ON US.



HE CAME
TO DO MURDER.
SOMETIMES
YOU'RE GONNA
GET GOT.

I WILL NOT...LET YOU...DISHONOR ME...

C'MON. WE GOT WHAT WE CAME FOR.

SPARK.

MOVE. THIS IS ALREADY A CLUSTER--

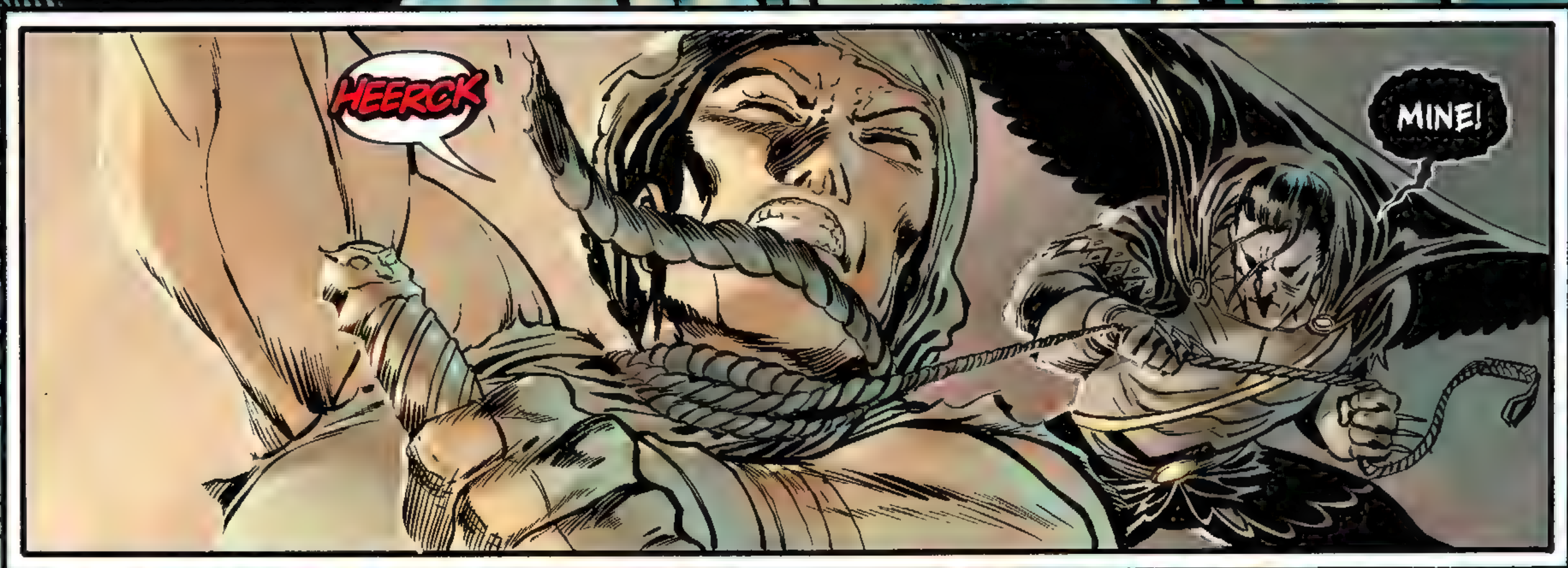
SPARK.

OH, FOR THE LOVE OF...HOW MUCH MORE SCREWED UP DOES THIS NIGHT HAVE TO GET?

SHEEEEEK

THAT-- IS MINE!

CHUNK
CHUNK
CHUNK



HEERCK

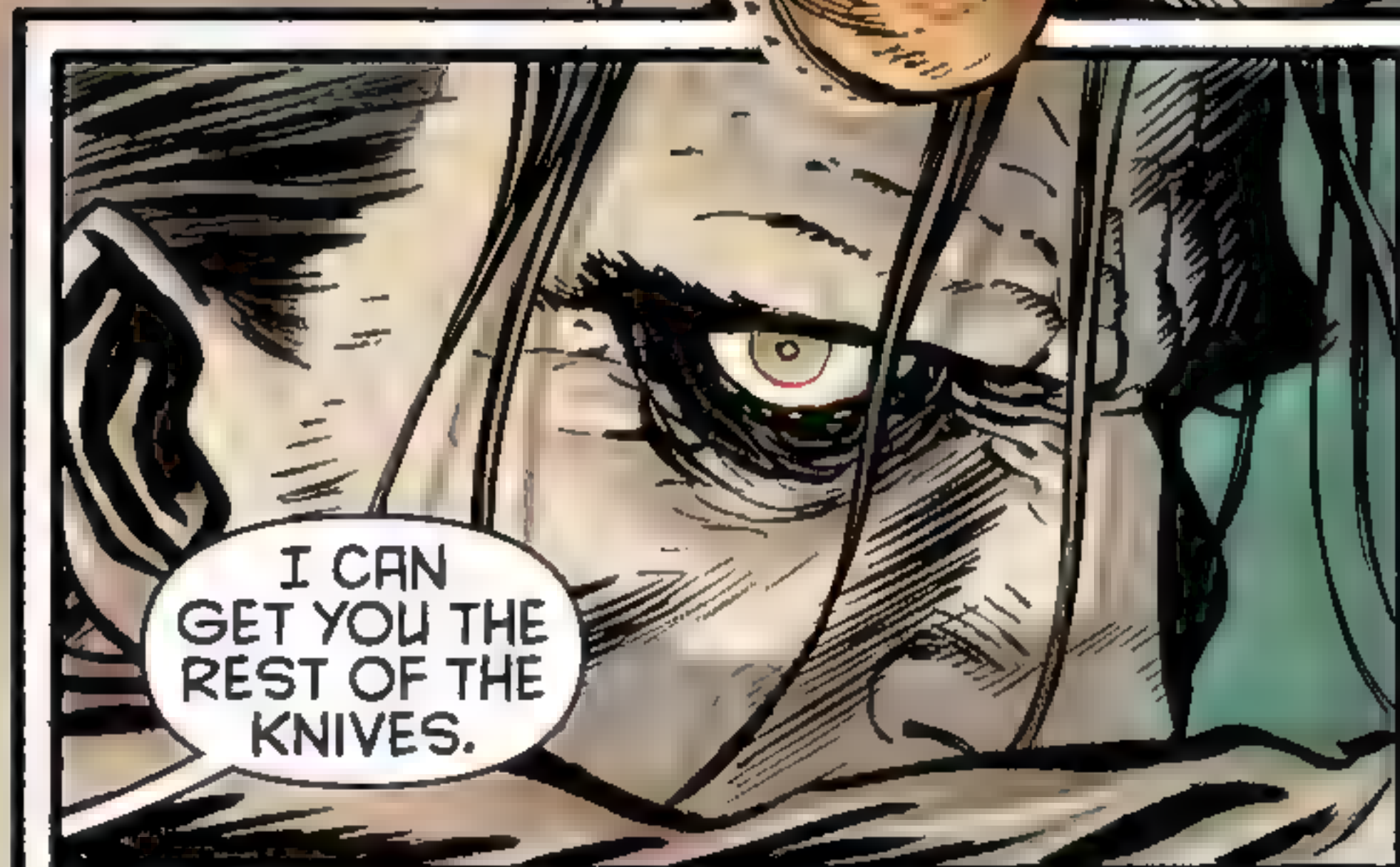
MINE!



I HAVE FAILED THE COURT SO MUCH. THEY HAVE BROUGHT ME BACK FROM THE DEPTHS...FROM THE DARK...

...THIS IS MY REDEMPTION. AND FATE HAS BROUGHT ME MY SACRED IMPLEMENT.

I WILL BE WHOLE. I WILL BE WORTHY.



I CAN GET YOU THE REST OF THE KNIVES.

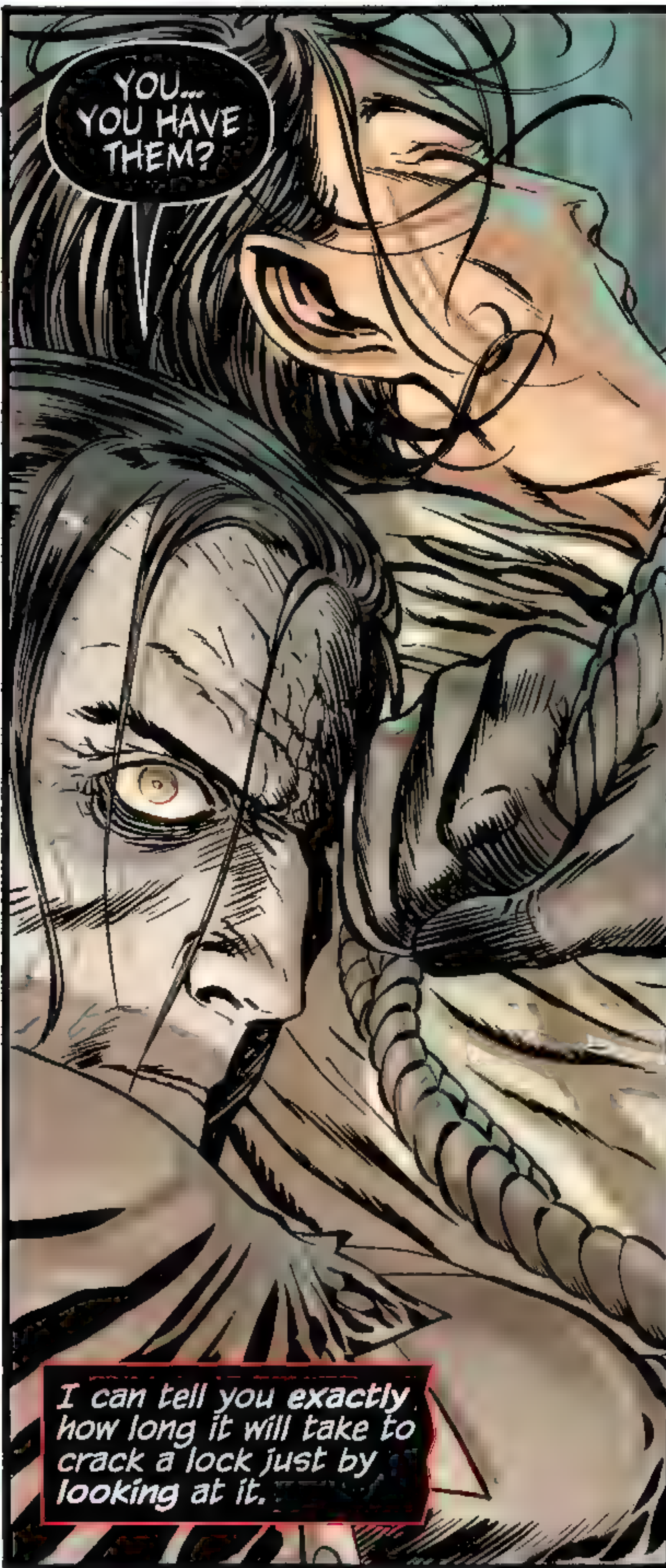


THERE'RE FIVE, RIGHT? I HAVE THE OTHER FOUR. LET HIM GO, AND I'LL GET YOU THE REST.



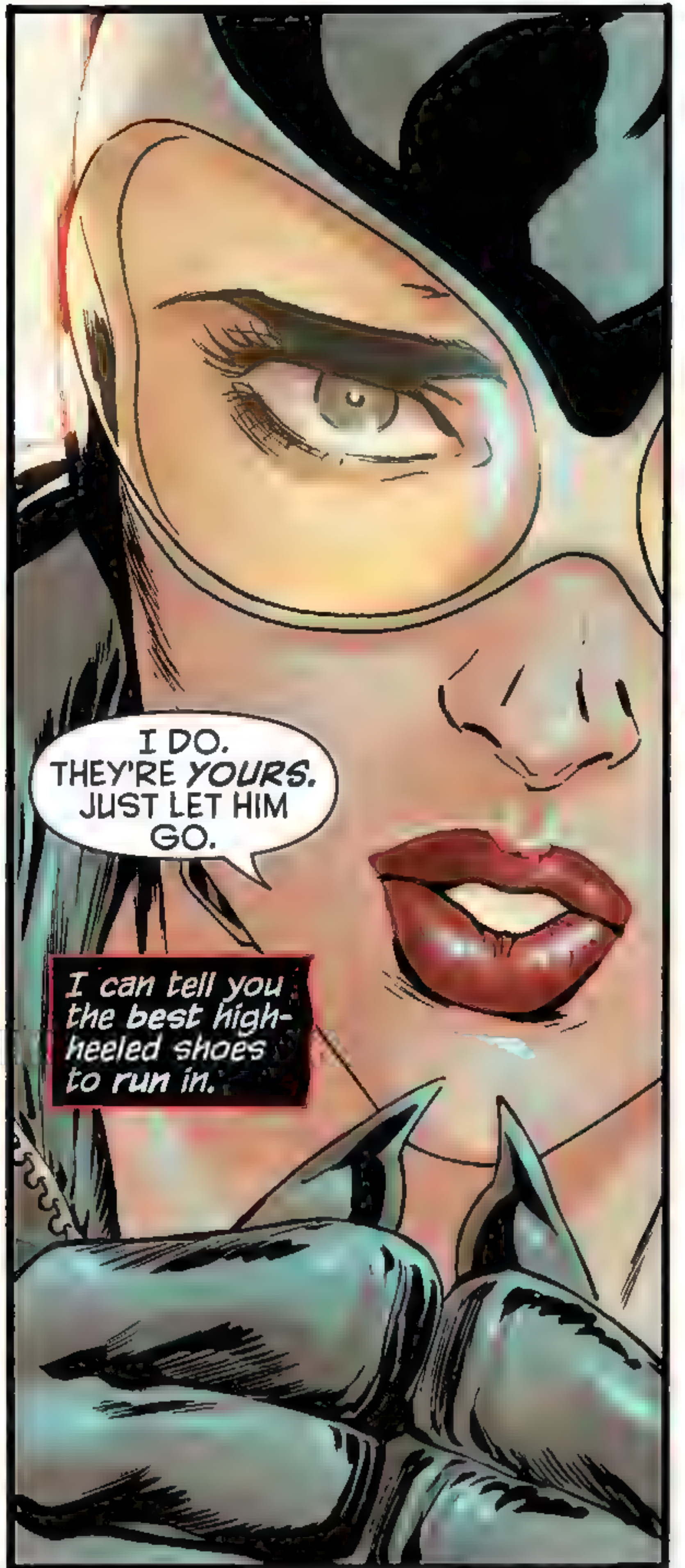
YOU...
YOU CAN
BE *WHOLE*
AGAIN.

*There're things I
know. Really know.*



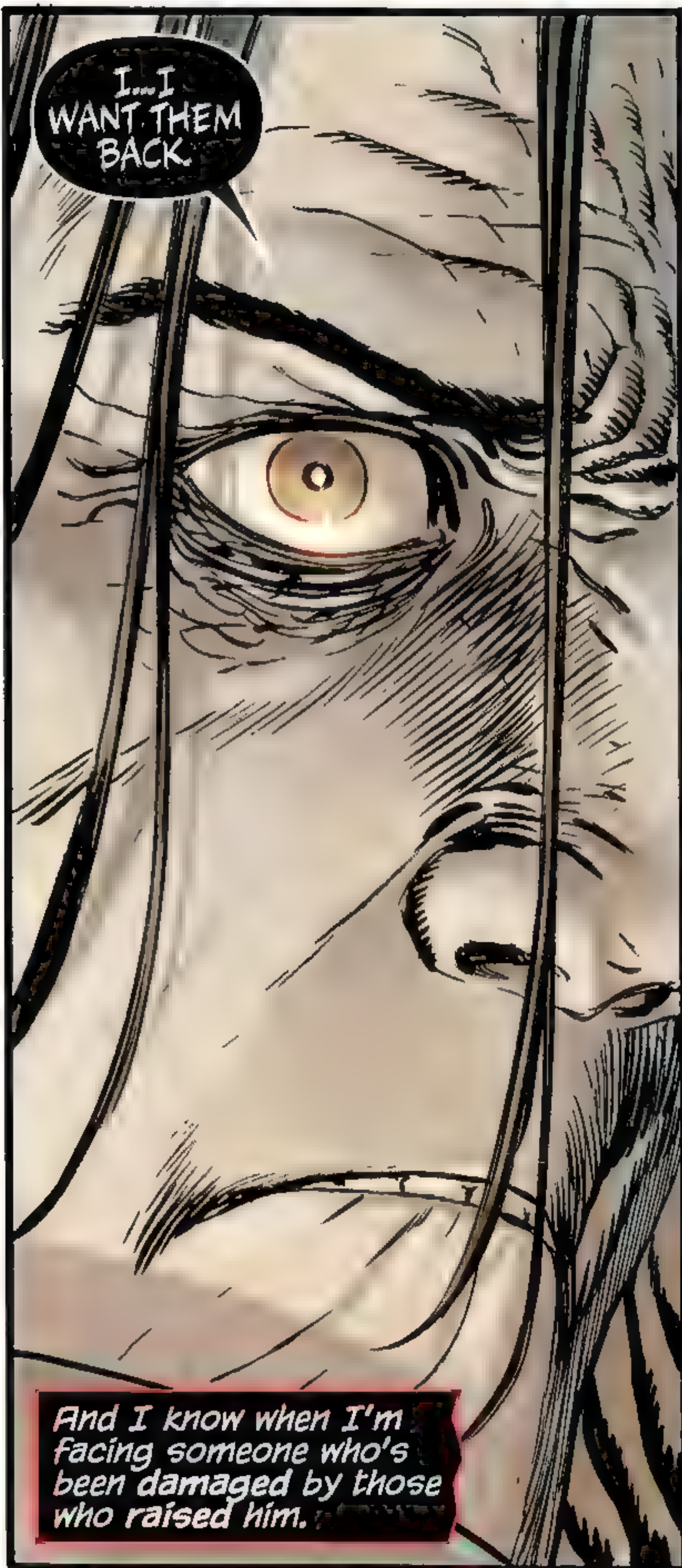
YOU...
YOU HAVE
THEM?

*I can tell you exactly
how long it will take to
crack a lock just by
looking at it.*



I DO.
THEY'RE *YOURS*.
JUST LET HIM
GO.

*I can tell you
the best high-
heeled shoes
to run in.*



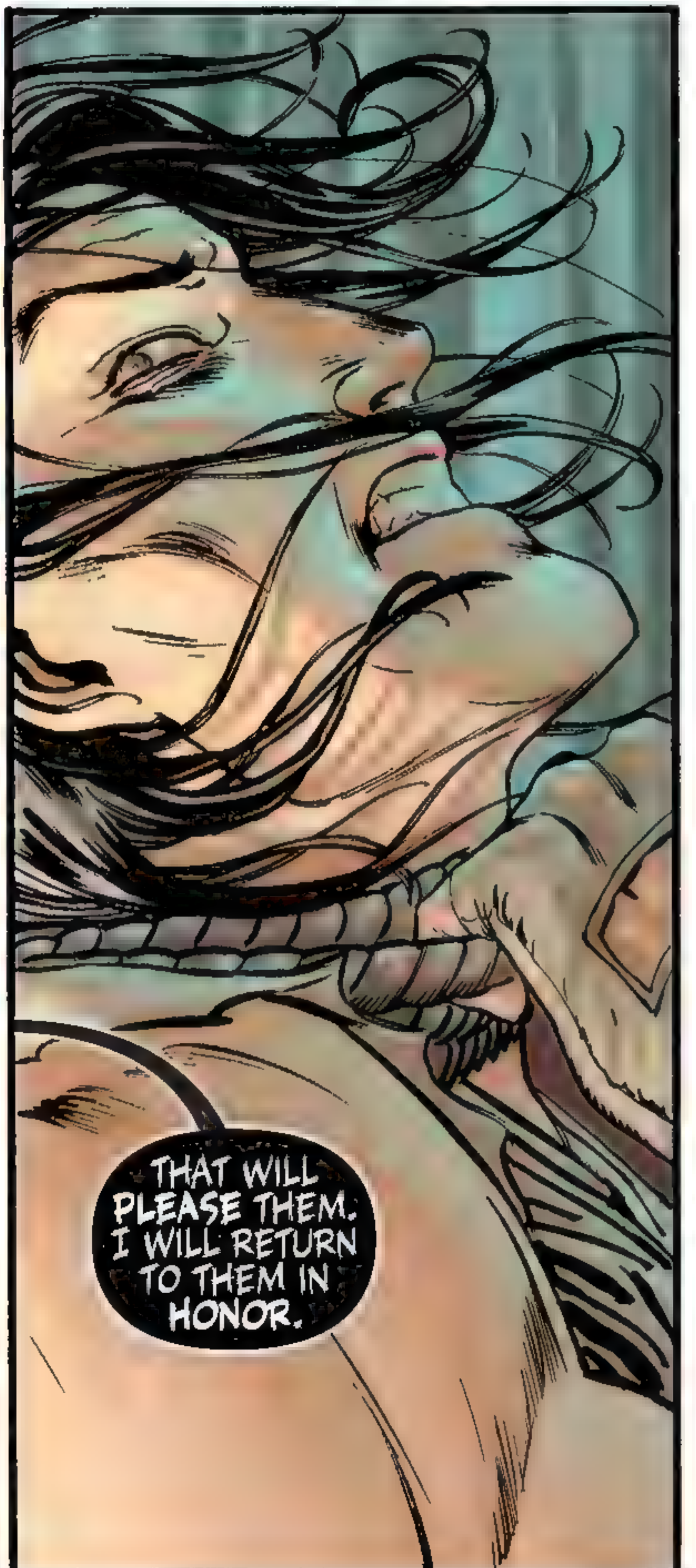
I...I
WANT THEM
BACK.

*And I know when I'm
facing someone who's
been damaged by those
who raised him.*

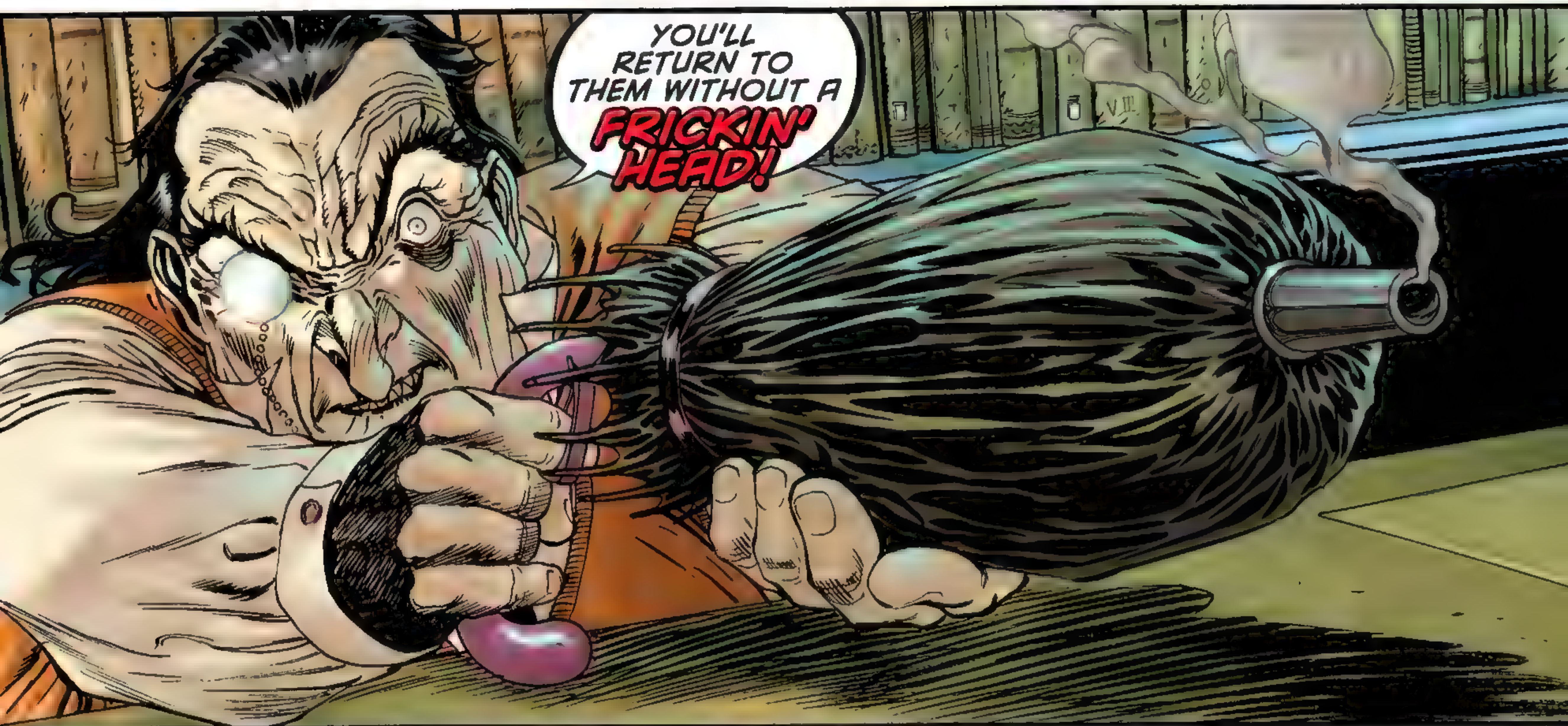


*Mirrors come
in all sizes.*

YOU'LL
HAVE
THEM.



THAT WILL
PLEASE THEM.
I WILL RETURN
TO THEM IN
HONOR.

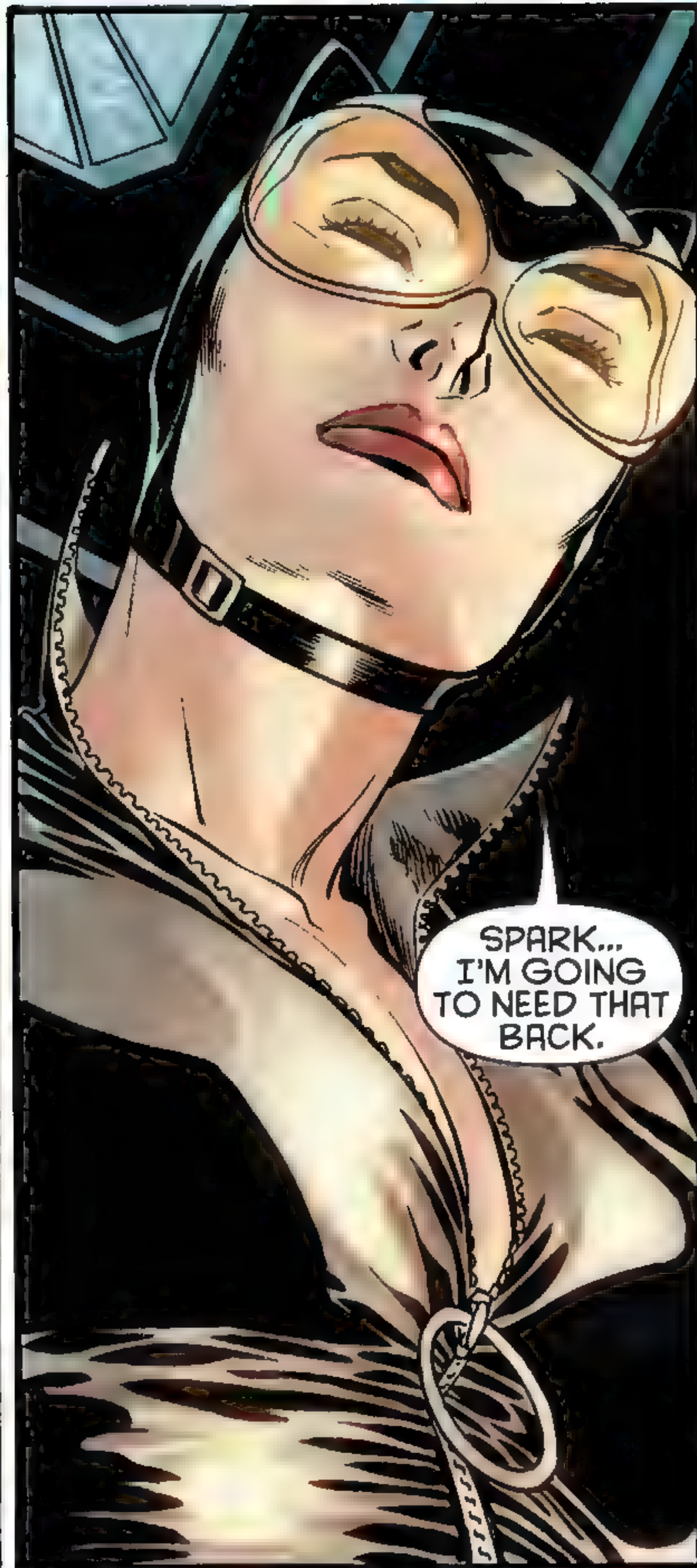




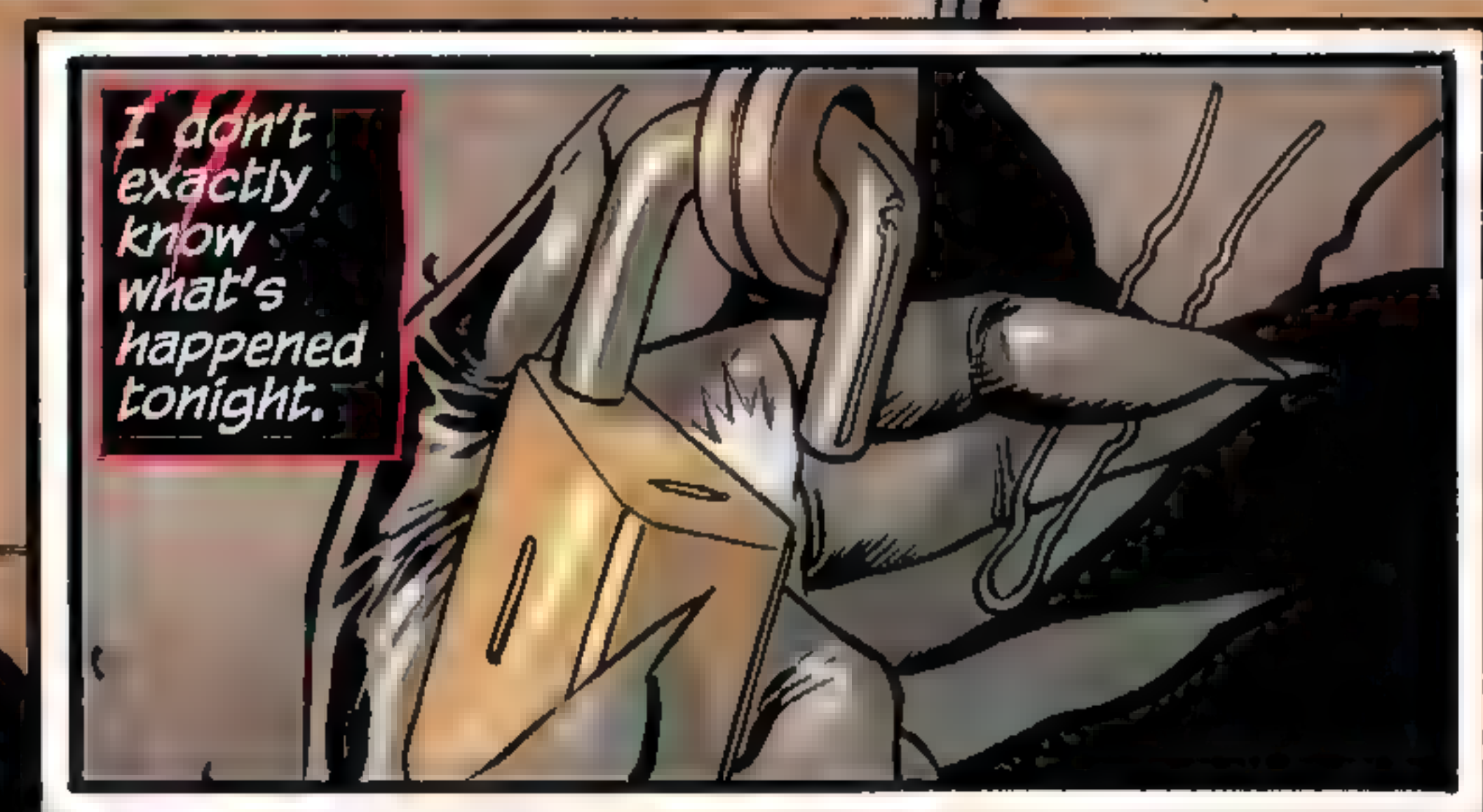
GODALMIGHTY...
LET'S JUST GET
THE HELL OUT OF
HERE. WE'VE GOT
THE *BLADE*--LET'S
JUST GO.



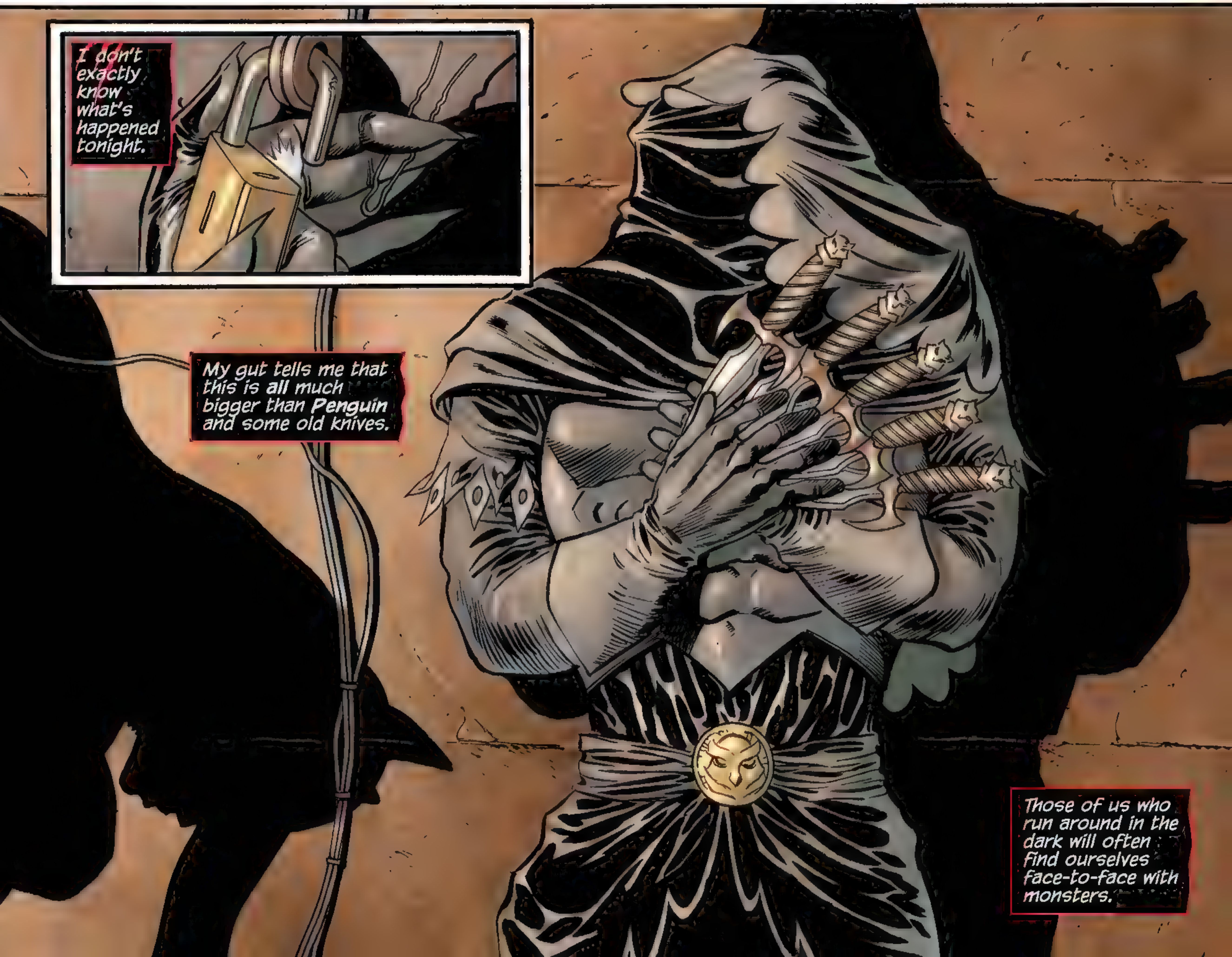
CATWOMAN?



SPARK...
I'M GOING
TO NEED THAT
BACK.



*I don't
exactly
know
what's
happened
tonight.*

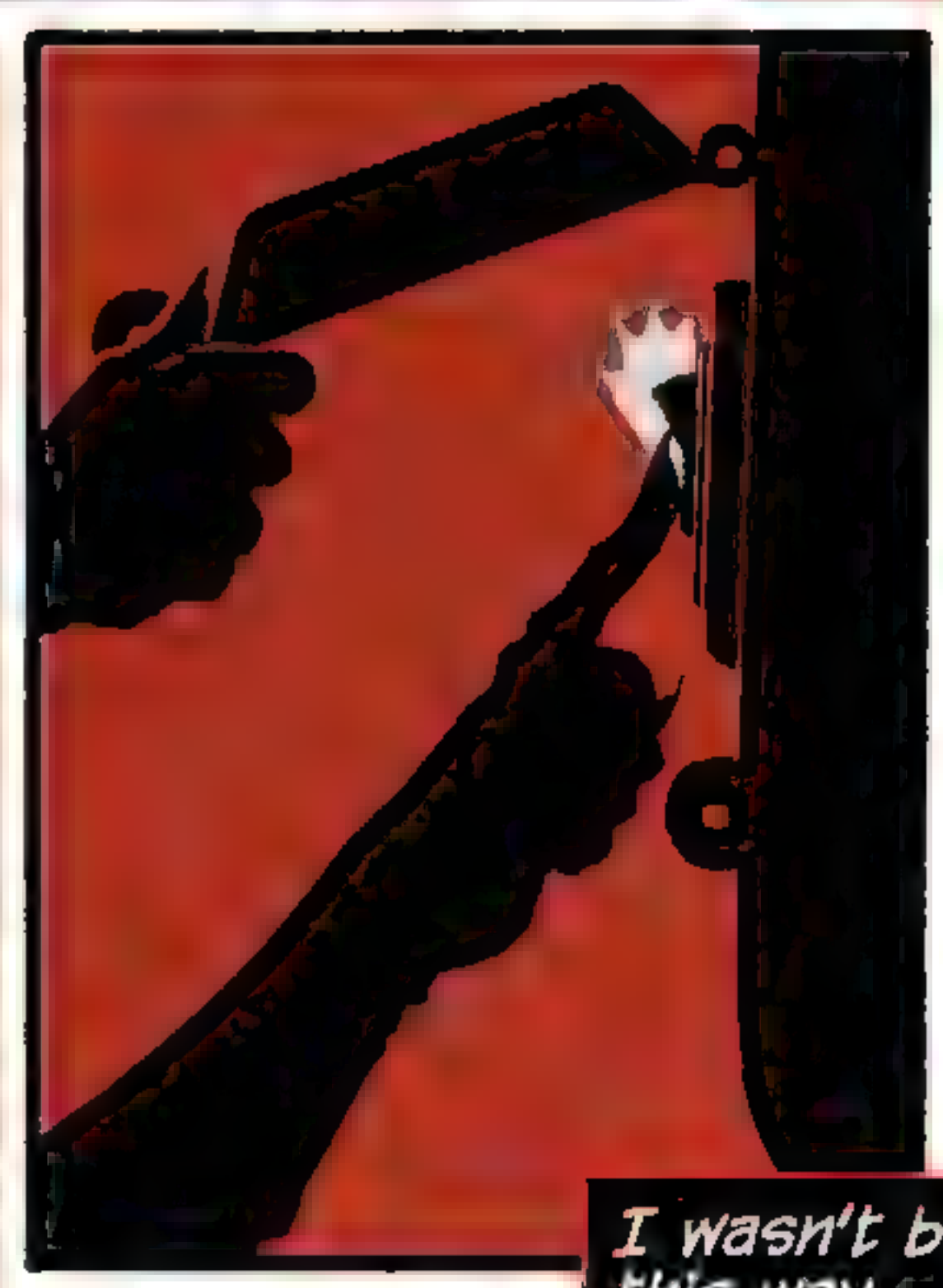


*My gut tells me that
this is all much
bigger than Penguin
and some old knives.*

*Those of us who
run around in the
dark will often
find ourselves
face-to-face with
monsters.*



*The trick with
monsters is to
remember that they
probably weren't
born monsters.*



*I wasn't born
this way.*

*All us monsters
deserve a little
mercy.*

MARCH
1/2

YEARS AGO...

From the desk of
Jarvis Pennyworth:



...shadows move within
Wayne Manor, and I
fear that I may no
longer be safe.

But frightened as I am for
myself, I am more frightened
for you, Alfred.


To My Dear
Son, Alfred...



FOR
ALFRED


Should I not survive
the journey home to
Britain, it is imperative
that you read what I
have to say...



A man in a trench coat stands in the rain, looking down. The scene is dark and moody, with rain falling heavily.


You've long known that it is your duty to fulfill my role with the Waynes upon my retirement or passing.

I know you believe that I want this for you.

A man in a trench coat stands in the rain, looking down. The scene is dark and moody, with rain falling heavily.

And I did, Alfred, for a long time, I did. But no longer.

I implore you, Dear Son. If you take only one line from this hurried letter, let it be this...

A man in a trench coat stands in the rain, looking down. The scene is dark and moody, with rain falling heavily.

...never come to this house.

A man in a trench coat stands in the rain, looking down. The scene is dark and moody, with rain falling heavily.

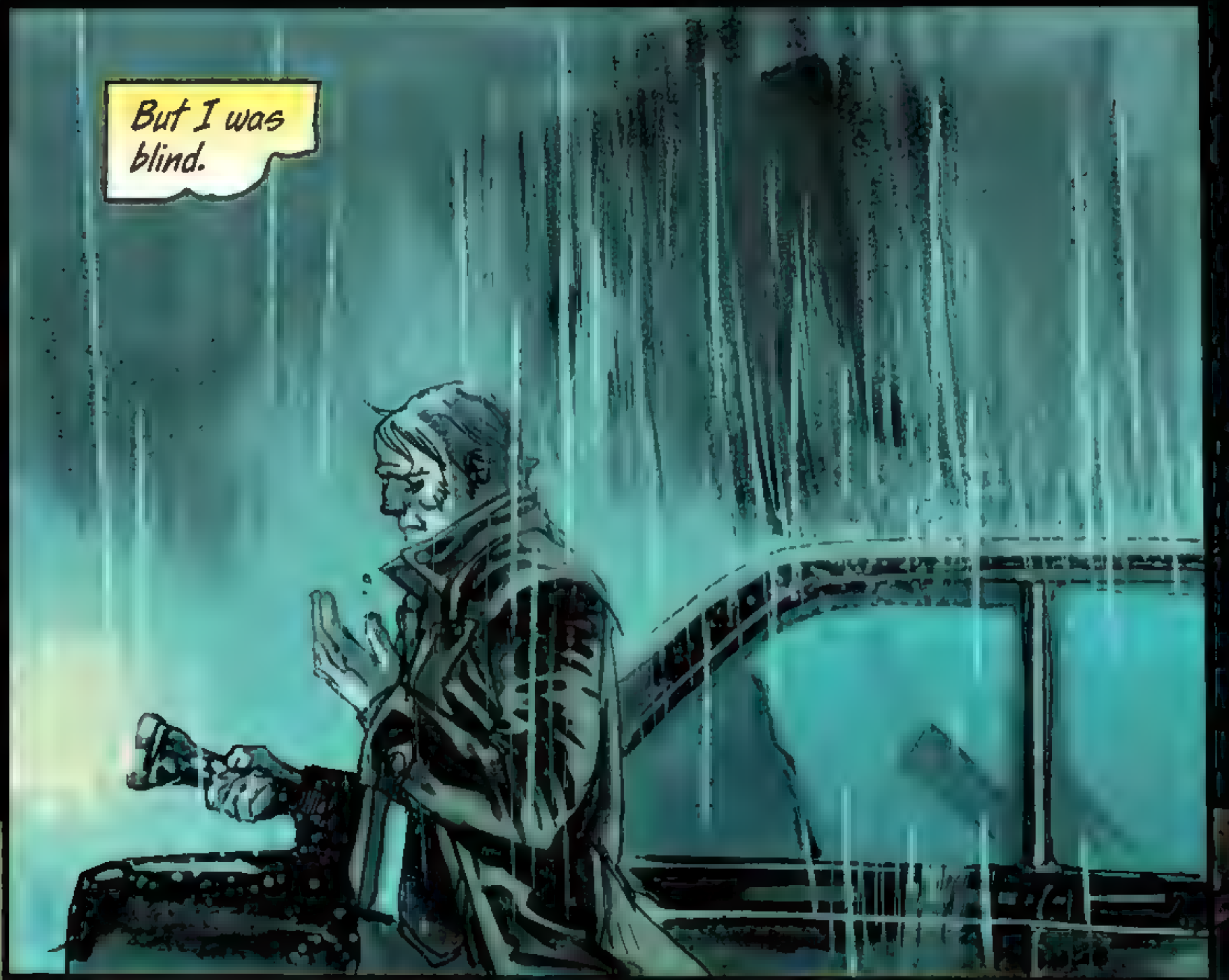
Never.

For you see, there's a secret to the House of Wayne, known only to those who have served the family.

And that secret is this, Alfred...this family, this house, the very ground I now walk is cursed.



If only I had seen it sooner, Alfred. If only I'd understood.



But I was blind.



Or blinded, rather...blinded by the grandeur of the Waynes, by the storied history of their line.



I couldn't see the darker legacy, the shadows behind the portraits.

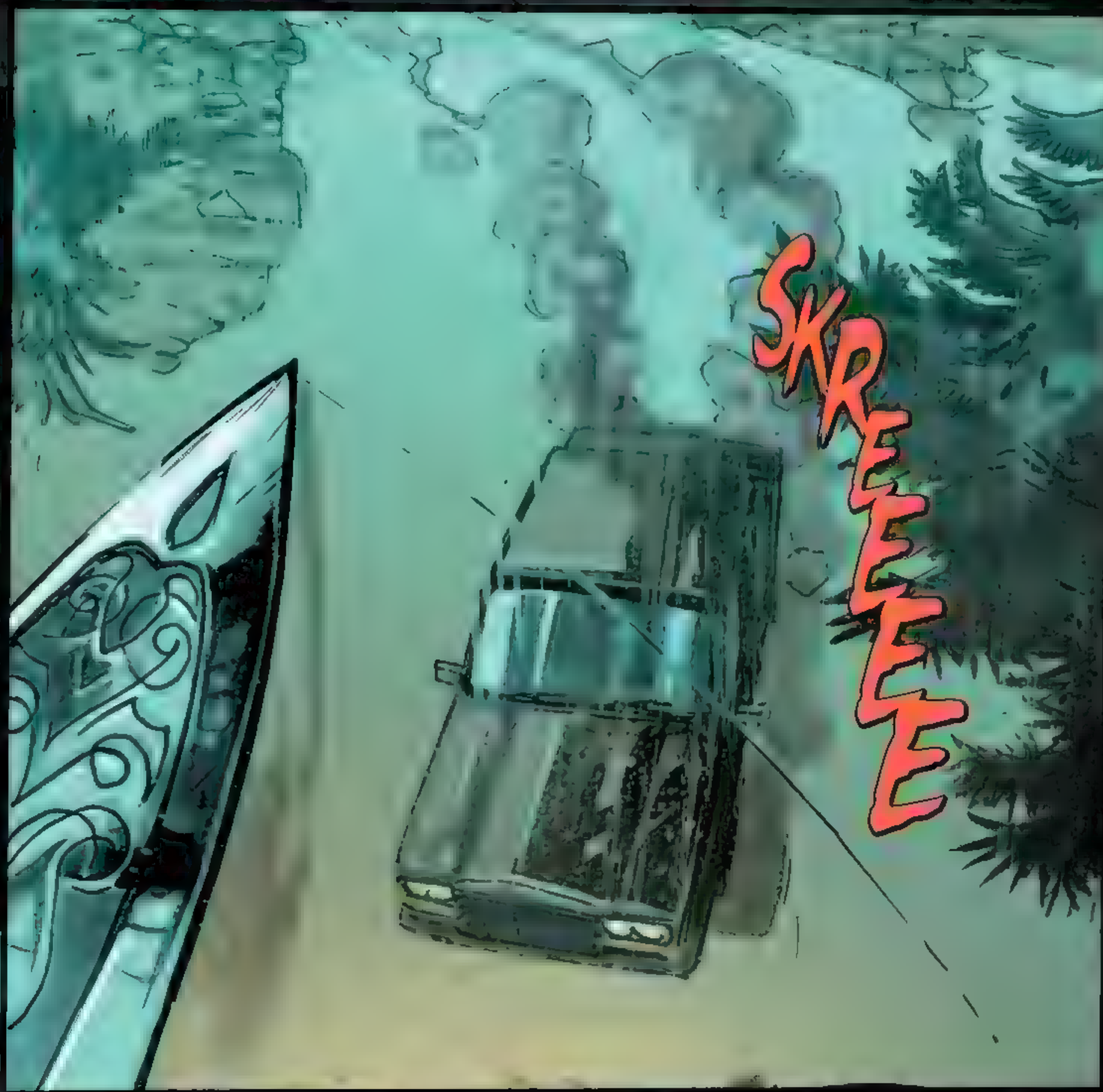


Or the danger...

...the terrible danger.



I SEE YOU...



SKREEEE

KRACK



...I SEE YOU, JARVIS PENNYWORTH...



"...AND I'M
COMING FOR
YOU, OLD MAN."



To think I may never
see you again, Alfred.
Never see you laugh or
perform on the stage.
Never see you marry.
Or raise children of
your own.

COME
ON, YOU
BLOODY...

CHKK



It's more than I
can bear. I cannot
tell you, Son, how I
regret not seeing
more of you these
last few years.

Please know
that I thought
of you often.



And in my own mind, in my heart,
I believed that all the effort, all
the time spent serving Martha
and Thomas Wayne and their
young son...



...that all of it
was for you,
Alfred.

For I was convinced
that in doing my best
to serve, to help
in my own way to
improve this home
and this family, I was
making a better
future for you.



Especially when it came
to young Master
Wayne, whom I knew you
would one day serve.

I loved and cared
for him so that he
would one day care
for you.

At least this is
what I believed,
then...



...perhaps I was lying to
myself, though, Alfred.
Perhaps I simply lost
myself in the happiness
of those days. That
young family.



But they were
happy times,
my Son. Know
that, too.



For a while,
at least.



I'VE
HAD IT,
THOMAS.



THE MAYOR
HAS SHUT DOWN
ANOTHER FIVE
SCHOOLS,
THAT CORRUPT,
SHORT-
SIGHTED
IDIOT...

...YOU KNOW IT'S
ONLY BECAUSE THE
SCHOOLS HAVEN'T FIGURED
OUT A WAY TO PAY HIM OFF.
IT'S **DISGUSTING**.



WELL, HE'LL GET
AN EARFUL THE NEXT
TIME HE COMES
KNOCKING AT OUR
DOOR FOR
FUNDRAISING.



WE NEED TO DO *MORE* THAN THAT, THOMAS. IT'S TIME. YOU KNOW IT, TOO.

I WANT GOTHAM TO BE A PLACE THAT ANY SON OF OURS WOULD BE *PROUD* TO CALL HOME.



WHAT DO YOU THINK, JARVIS? TIME FOR US ALL TO VENTURE OUT OF THE NEST?

A FINE IDEA, MADAM.

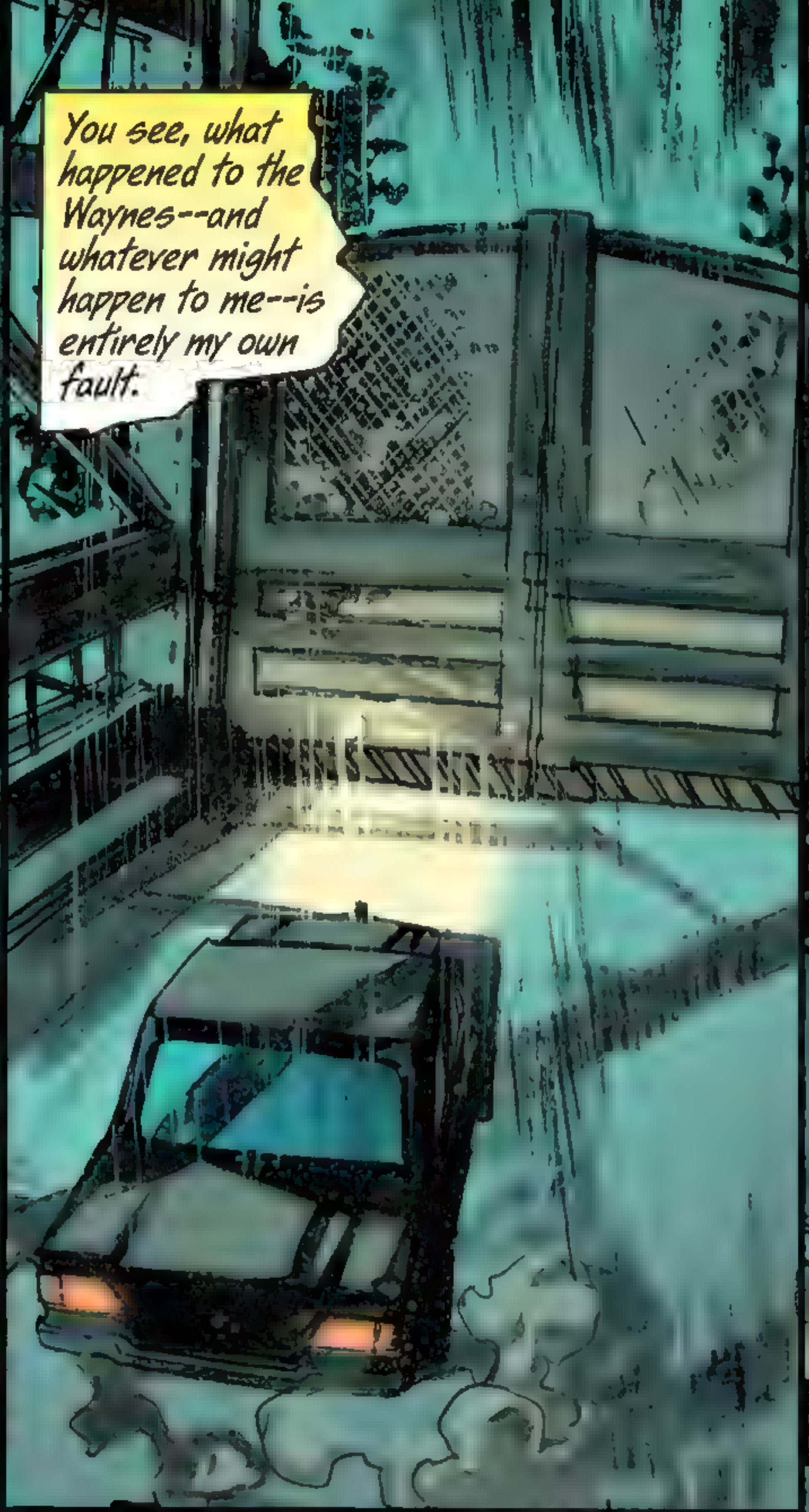


How wrong we were, though, my Son...

I hesitate as I write this, because the temptation to blame all that followed on Martha Wayne is incredibly powerful.



And particularly since I am writing this to you, my Son, I am ashamed to tell the truth.

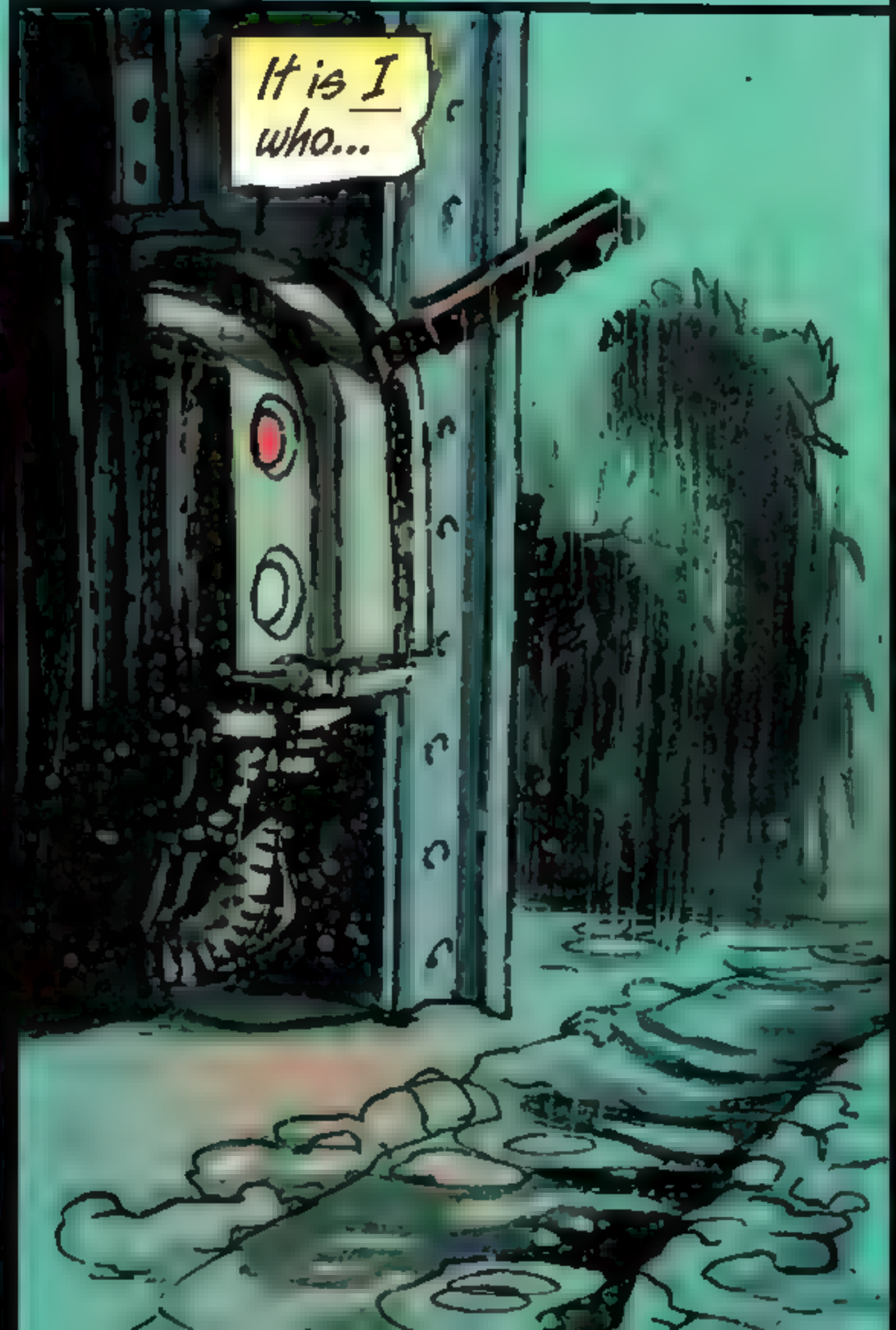


You see, what happened to the Waynes--and whatever might happen to me--is entirely my own fault.

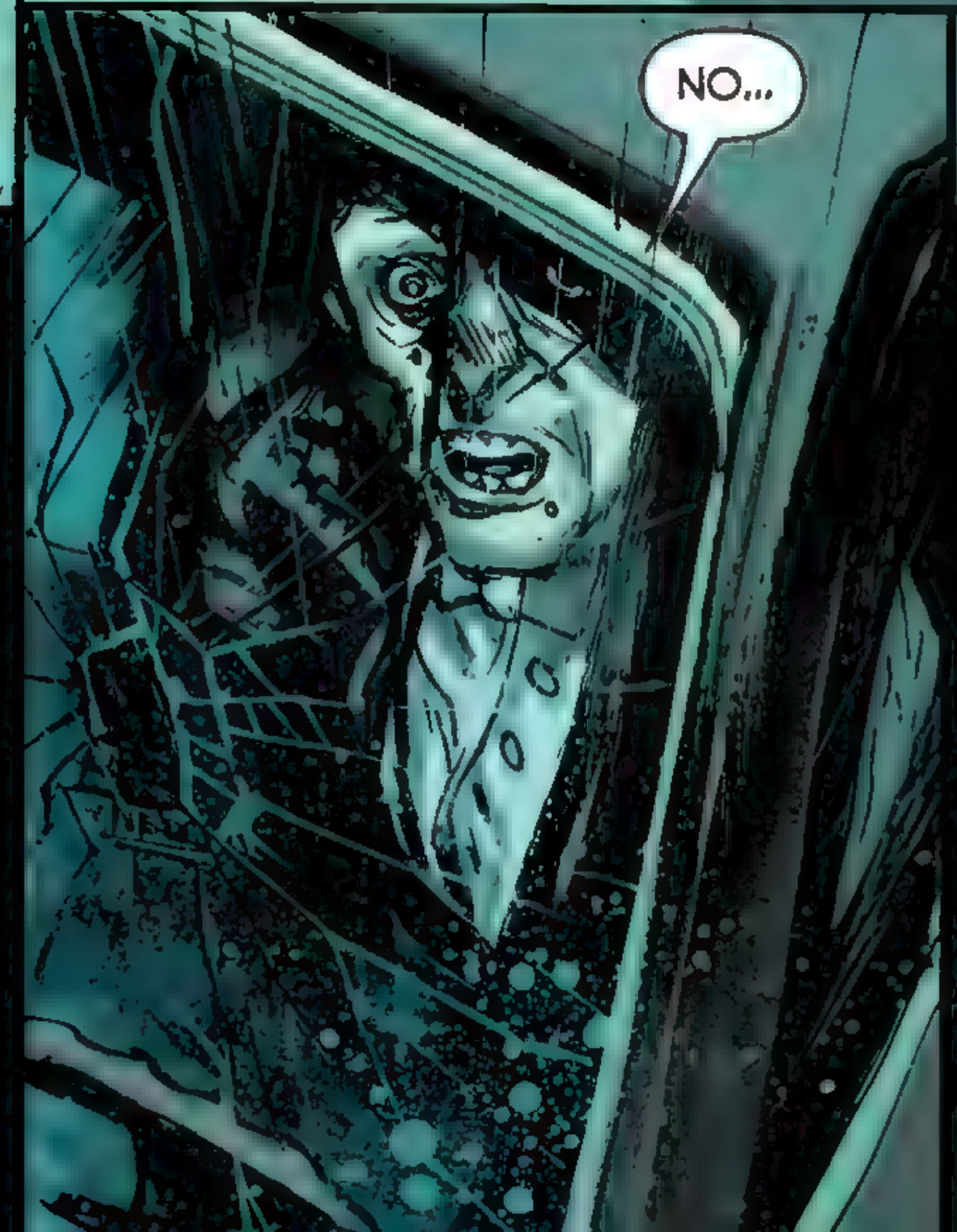


LOCKED? BUT HOW...

There is the cold hard truth, my boy.



It is I who...



NO...

...it is I who
have doomed
us all.



AK

AK

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF WAYNE

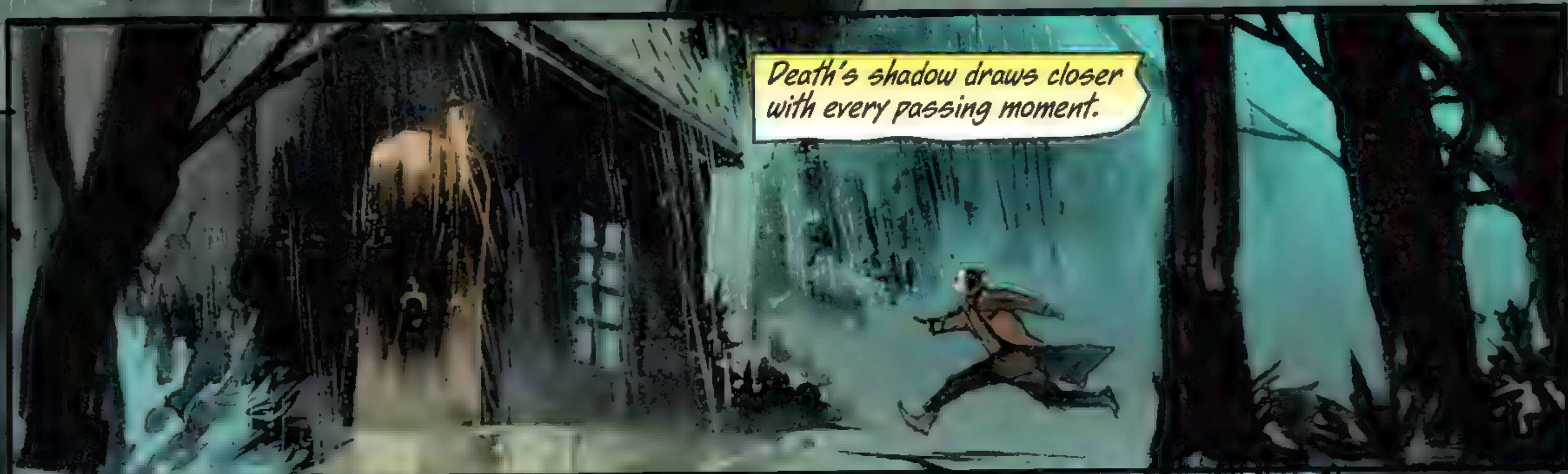
WRITERS SCOTT SNYDER & JAMES TYNION IV
ART RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE
COLORS DAVE MCCAIG
LETTERS PATRICK BROSSAU

The hour is late, my boy...my Alfred.

If I do not escape soon, I fear I will never leave these wretched grounds.



Death's shadow draws closer with every passing moment.



I fear for my life, but more for the secret horrors I have unleashed...



AAAAH!



...not only upon the Lady Martha and Master Thomas...



...but the very legacy
of the Wayne Family.

You see, Martha had resolved
herself to the creation of
a new school for Gotham's
underprivileged, its
forgotton children.

She believed that
through this school,
she could shape the
city into something
brighter for young
Master Bruce...

crayon
Kit - 2

...and for her second
child, who was nearly
due to be born.

I spent my days caring
for Bruce as his mother
tended to her plans and
to her pregnancy.

Even at three years old, Bruce
was an an exceptional child.
Smart and kind...I knew you
would love him one day as I do.

But now, none of that
will come to pass.

"JARVIS, CAN YOU
COME IN HERE
FOR A MOMENT?"



YES, MADAM?

GATHER UP BRUCE AND GET HIM READY FOR BED. I'LL BE UP JUST AFTER THIS CALL.



I'M SORRY, MR. MAYOR, I--NO--I BEG YOUR PARDON, SIR! THESE MEN SAID THEY REPRESENTED THE CITY. WHO THE HELL ELSE WOULD I THINK--

YOU DON'T APPRECIATE MY TONE?!

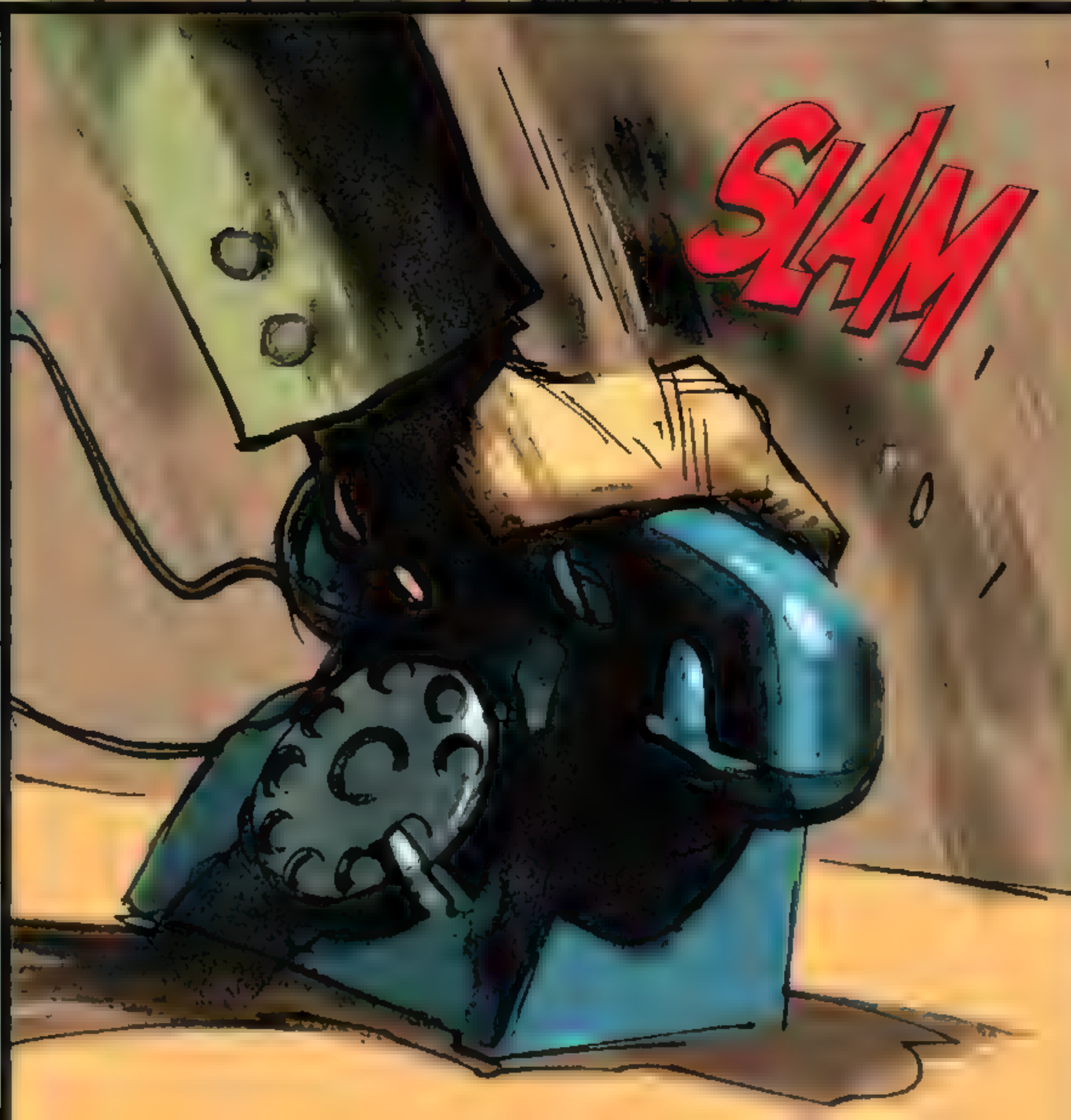


THESE MEN THREATENED MY **UNBORN CHILD!** IF THEY CALL AGAIN, I PROMISE THAT THE LAWYERS OF BOTH THE KANE AND WAYNE FAMILIES WILL COME DOWN ON YOU SO FAST YOUR HEAD WILL SPIN.

HOW DOES **THAT** SOUND TO YOU?



RUN UP TO YOUR ROOM, NOW, MASTER BRUCE.



JUST **LET** THEM TRY TO STOP ME.

*In a city like Gotham,
there will always be
those who stand firmly
against progress.*

*My entire life, I had
heard rumors, rhymes,
and deadly superstitions
of such figures.*

SMASH

*My father even told me once
never to push a Wayne towards
greatness. Happiness is a
more worthy goal.*

*And far
less deadly.*

*I never took the
admonition seriously,
until the day I received
that fateful call.*



WAYNE MANOR.
JARVIS SPEAKING.
HOW MAY I
HELP YOU?

AH! MR.
PENNYWORTH.
JUST THE MAN
I WISHED TO
REACH. I NEED
YOU TO LISTEN
VERY
CAREFULLY.

THE NEXT TIME YOU
TAKE MRS. WAYNE INTO THE
CITY, YOU WILL TAKE HER TO
DOCK SEVENTEEN AT THE
GOTHAM MARINA, FOR A
CONVERSATION
BETWEEN FRIENDS.

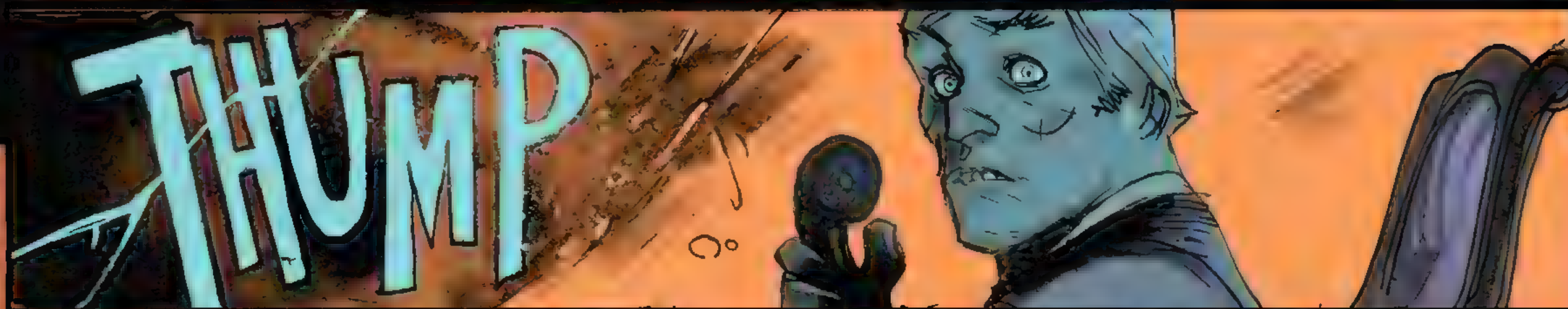


WHY WOULD
I EVER--

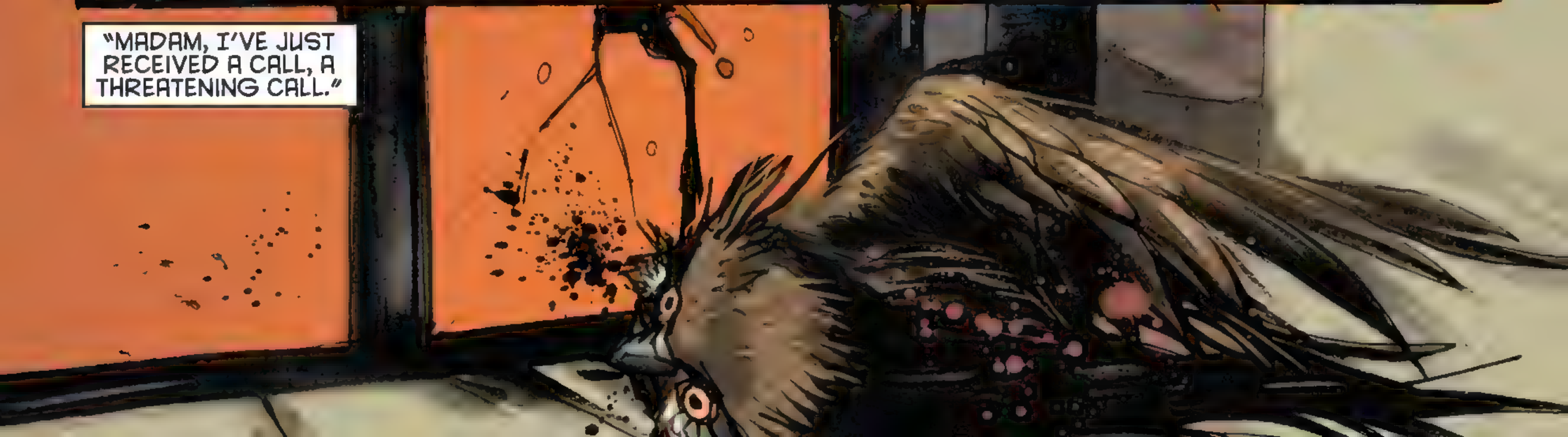
FAIL TO COMPLY,
AND I PROMISE
YOU... IT WON'T BE
PLEASANT. FOR YOU
OR YOUR MASTERS,
PAST, PRESENT AND
FUTURE.



WHO IS THIS?
WHO THE HELL
DO YOU THINK--



"MADAM, I'VE JUST
RECEIVED A CALL, A
THREATENING CALL."





THE MAYOR'S GOONS STILL WANT TO FRIGHTEN ME, DO THEY? I THINK THEY'LL FIND I DON'T SCARE EASY.

I HAVE A SUSPICION THIS MIGHT BE **BIGGER** THAN CITY HALL. THEY WANT ME TO TAKE YOU TO SOME UNWATCHED CORNER OF THE DOCKS...



WELL, I GUESS WE'RE NOT GOING TO THE DOCKS THEN, ARE WE?

NO, OF COURSE NOT, MADAM.

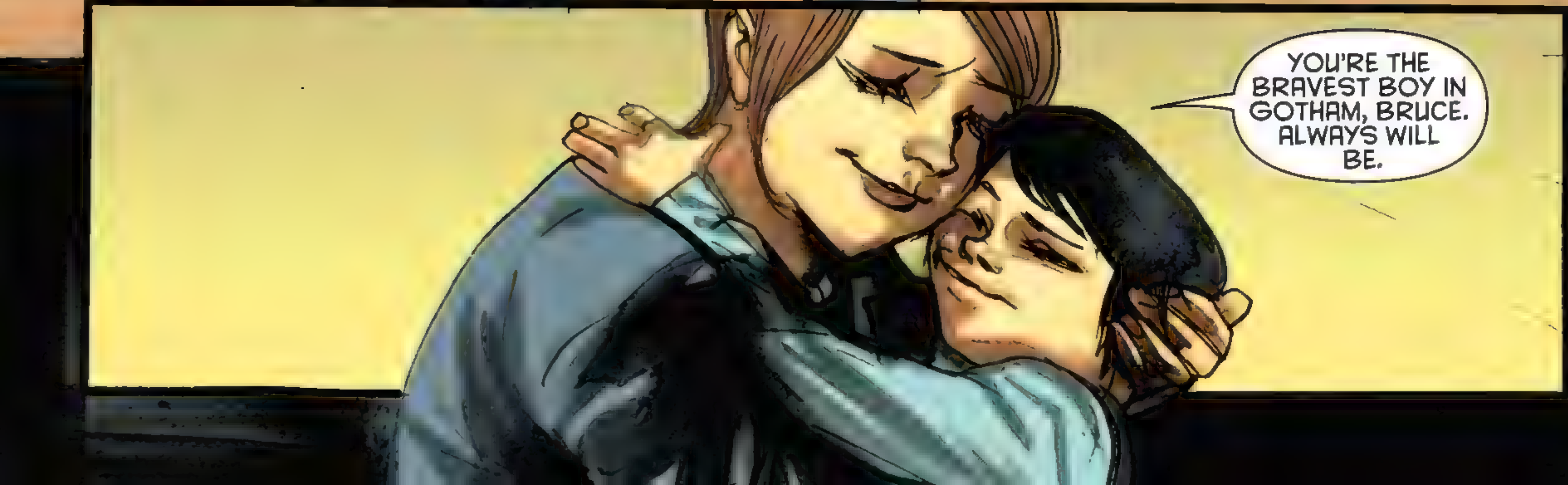


BUT IN YOUR CONDITION, I STILL MUST URGE CAUTION--



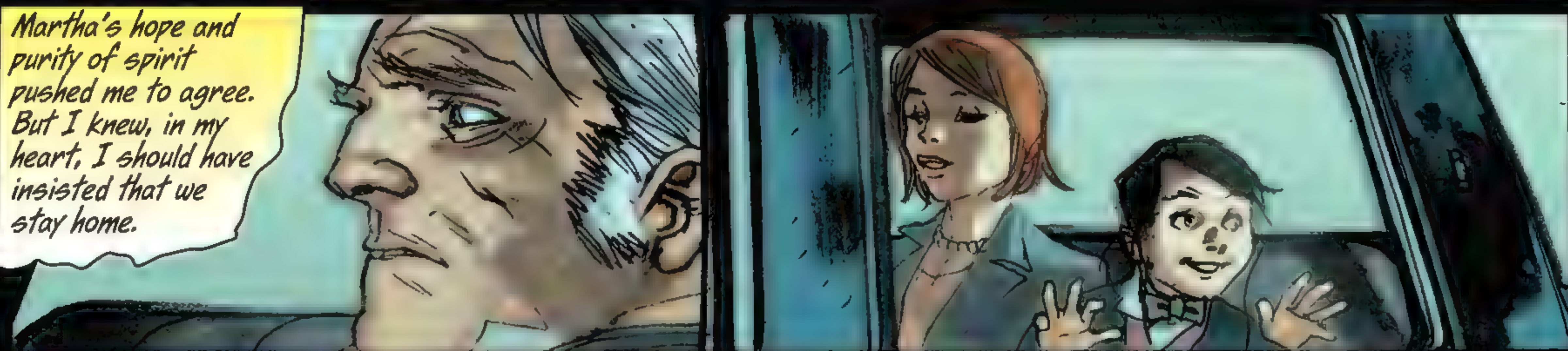
JARVIS. IN MY "CONDITION" OR NOT, I **WILL NOT** BE TERRORIZED IN MY OWN CITY. NOW LET'S GET THE CAR READY. I'VE PROMISED BRUCE I'D SHOW HIM THE GROUNDS FOR THE NEW SCHOOL.

I'M BRAVE, MOMMY!



YOU'RE THE BRAVEST BOY IN GOTHAM, BRUCE. ALWAYS WILL BE.

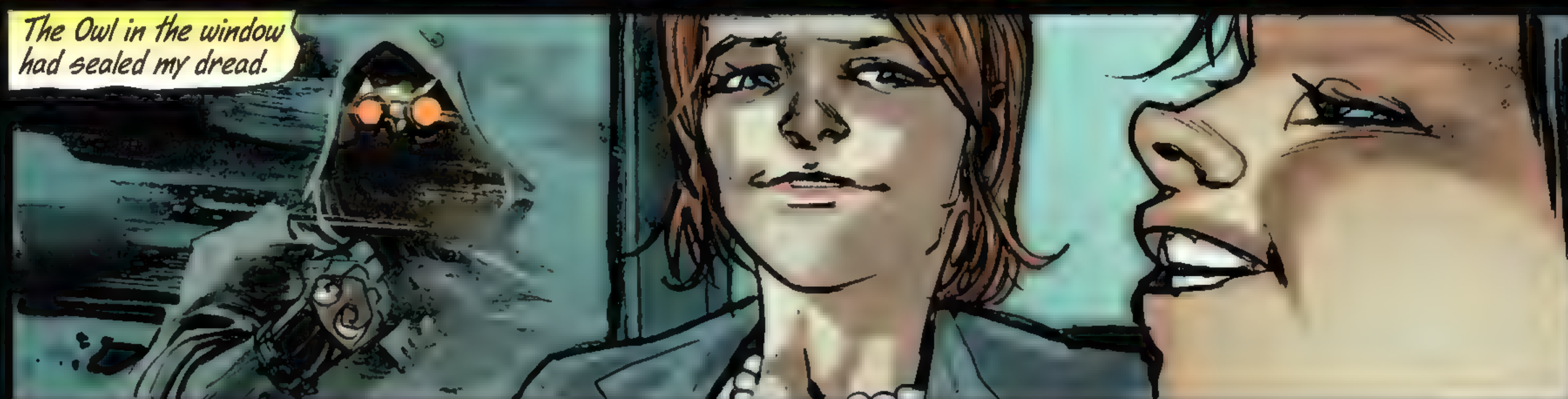
Martha's hope and
purity of spirit
pushed me to agree.
But I knew, in my
heart, I should have
insisted that we
stay home.



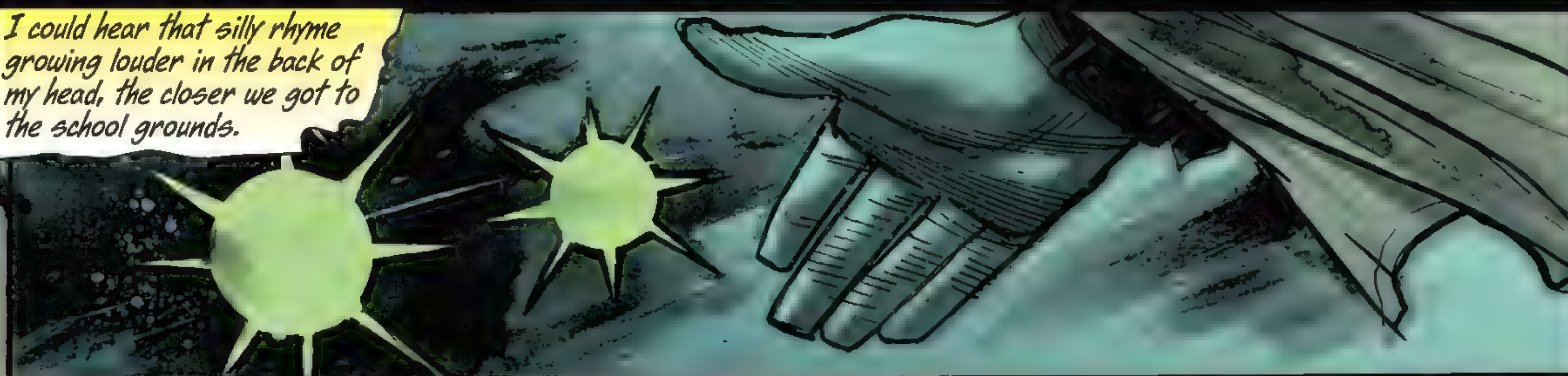
I had my suspicions,
now, as to what figures
haunted the Waynes.



The Owl in the window
had sealed my dread.



I could hear that silly rhyme
growing louder in the back of
my head, the closer we got to
the school grounds.

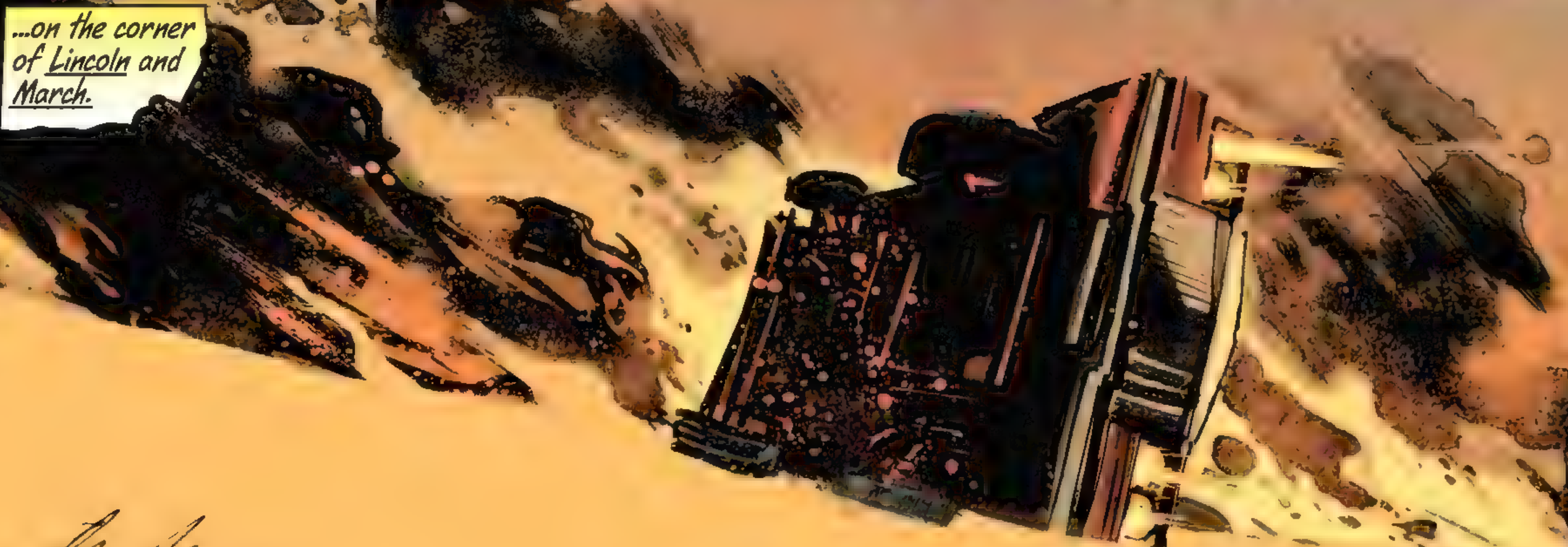


The closer we got
to that damned
intersection...


SKREEEEEEE




...on the corner
of Lincoln and
March.




2012



Screeching metal, burning rubber and fire...followed by perfect blackness.




A blackness punctuated by the screams of the injured Martha Wayne...



...that's what I remember of that terrible night, Alfred.

The screams...and the blood. Mine, hers, Bruce's... on my face, my hands.



Oh, my boy... the blood.

Lady Martha had taken the brunt of the crash, shielding young Bruce from danger, and the trauma of the accident had caused the early birth, and loss, of her unborn child.

The days following the crash were the blackest...Martha was so consumed by sadness.

One night I actually overheard her whispering to Master Thomas as though their unborn son was still alive. When she saw me approach, she seemed horrified at her own words.

To honor their lost baby, and perhaps to expedite a healing, the Waynes planted a willow tree on the edge of the Wayne Cemetery...

...so he might look over the family for generations to come.

But the tree brought no closure for any of us. And so Master Thomas decided it would be best if they left the country for the summer. So they might heal away from the city.

...that I could reclaim the sheer joy of life I had experienced just a few short months ago.

But the back of my mind itched with the original threat that sent us out on the road that fateful afternoon.

As I helped him pack his belongings, I wished deep in my heart that I could simply forget the trauma of these days like young Master Bruce...

And when the phone rang a second time this evening, I knew who would be on the line.

BBBRIIINNG

BBRING

YOU DIDN'T GO WHERE WE TOLD YOU, MR. PENNYWORTH, BUT WE STILL TOOK WHAT WE WANTED... THE SCHOOL IS GONE, AND A LITTLE WAYNE, TOO... HEH...


NOW THAT OUR LARGER WORK IS DONE, THE EYES OF THE OWLS HAVE TURNED TOWARD YOU.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!


JARVIS PENNYWORTH... WE ARE A POWERFUL ENEMY TO HAVE IN GOTHAM. NOT JUST FOR YOU, BUT FOR THOSE YOU LOVE. YOUR OWN FAMILY. YOUR SON... ALFRED...

YOU... YOU LEAVE MY SON ALONE, YOU MONSTERS! YOU HEAR ME?!

WE WATCH YOU AT YOUR HEARTH, WE WATCH YOU IN YOUR BED...

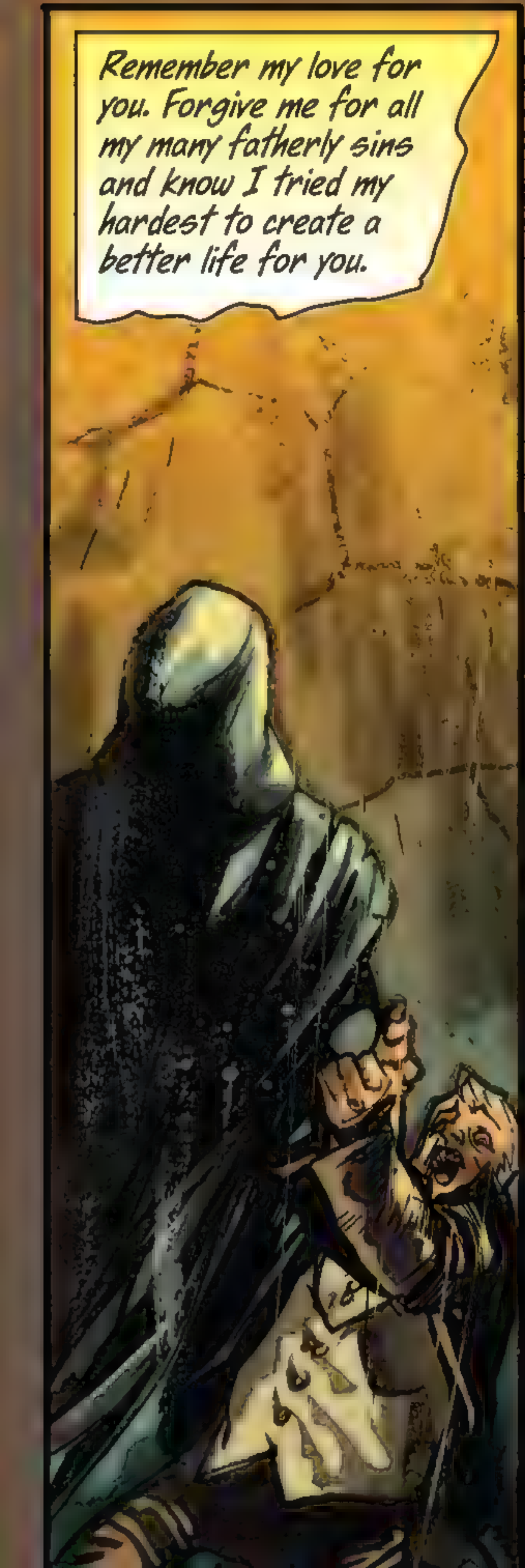


Tonight, Alfred, the shadows haunting Wayne Manor have come for me.

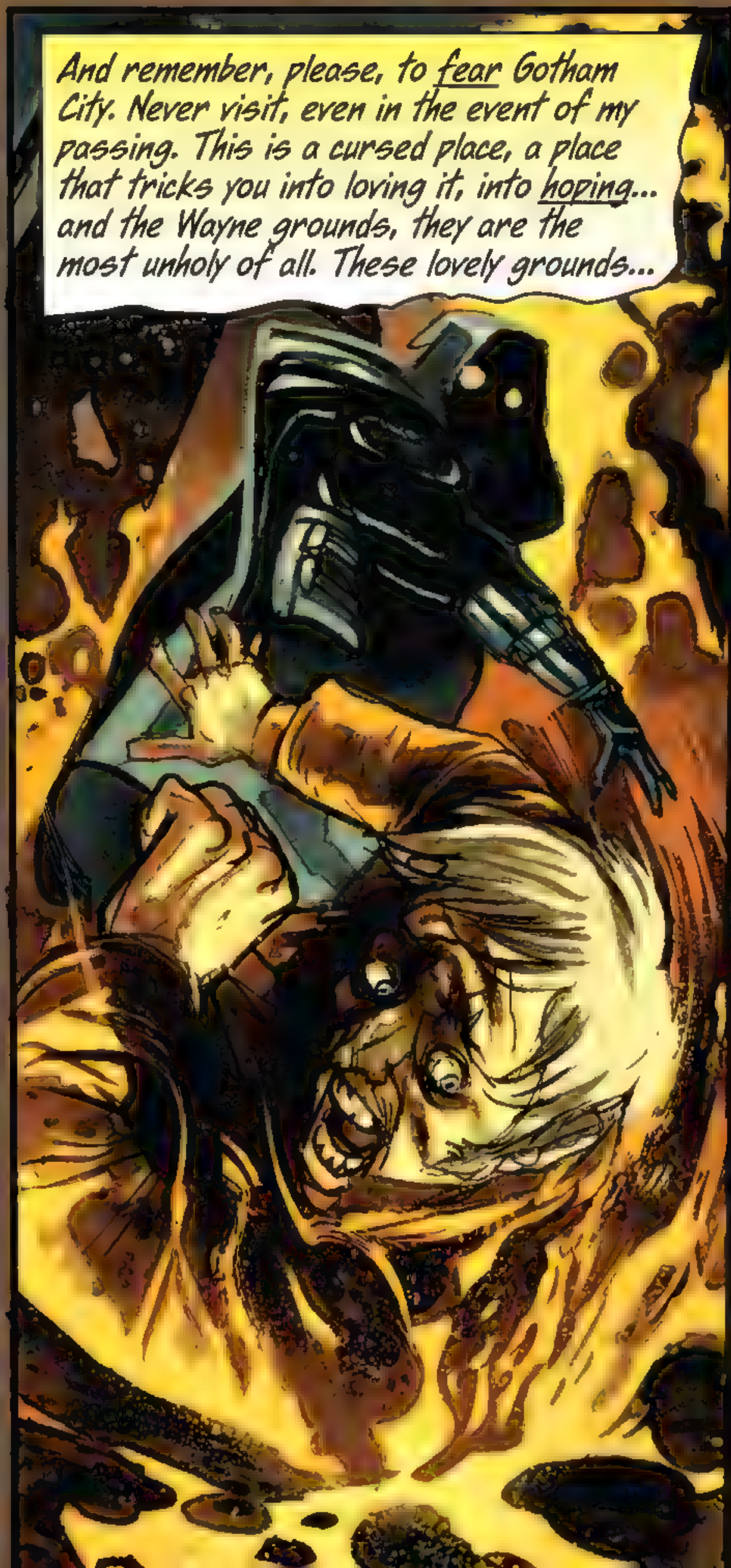


My goal--my only goal--is to reach you, my dear Son. And hold you again. But...


...should we never meet again in this lifetime, remember these simple truths.



Remember my love for you. Forgive me for all my many fatherly sins and know I tried my hardest to create a better life for you.



And remember, please, to fear Gotham City. Never visit, even in the event of my passing. This is a cursed place, a place that tricks you into loving it, into hoping... and the Wayne grounds, they are the most unholy of all. These lovely grounds...



...but I must hurry. I trust that if I should die, this warning will reach you and keep you safe from harm.

With deep love and regret,

Your father

Jarvis Pennyw...



PRESENT DAY...

JARVIS
PENNYWORTH

JARVIS
PENNYWORTH

THE FLOWERS ARE BEAUTIFUL,
ALFRED. I'M SURE YOUR
FATHER WOULD HAVE
LOVED THEM.

I'M NOT SURE HE WOULD. HE NEVER DID HAVE
TIME FOR MY LITTLE ECCENTRICITIES...ACTING,
BOTANY...HE WAS ALWAYS PESTERING ME TO TAKE
UP A TRADE MORE *SENSIBLE* FOR MY UPCOMING
LIFE HERE AT THE MANOR.

AS IF *ANYTHING*
COULD HAVE
PREPARED ME FOR
MY LIFE THESE PAST
YEARS...CERTAINLY
NOT MY FATHER, NO
MATTER WHAT
SHAPE HIS DEATH
ACTUALLY
TOOK.

SO THIS IS ABOUT
MY FINDING THE
PENNYWORTH
NAME IN
THE OWLS'
LABYRINTH.

WE CAN LEARN
THE TRUTH, ALFRED.
UNEARTH THE BODY
AND DETERMINE THE
REAL CAUSE OF
DEATH...

THIS ISN'T ABOUT
CAUSE OF DEATH,
MASTER BRUCE.

I WON'T DENY THERE'S
A SPECTER OF DESIGN
TO THE DISCOVERIES OF
THESE LAST FEW WEEKS.
THE REEMERGENCE OF
MY FATHER'S NAME...



...A MAN WHO DIED VIOLENTLY A FEW WEEKS AFTER YOUR MOTHER MISCARRIED THE BROTHER YOU NEVER KNEW YOU LOST.

WHICH IS WHY I THINK IT'S **OUR RESPONSIBILITY** TO ACT.

WE **ARE** ACTING. EACH IN OUR OWN WAY.

I REMEMBER THE CLOUD OF DARKNESS WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THIS PLACE...AT THE TIME, I TRULY FELT THAT THE MANOR WAS CURSED. SOMEHOW **HAUNTED**.

I SUPPOSE IT ***WAS***, IN A WAY. I IMAGINE THE ACCIDENT WOULD HAVE LOOMED LARGE DURING YOUR FIRST YEAR.

IT WAS MORE THAN THAT...DID YOU KNOW I NEVER CAME TO VISIT MY FATHER HERE? I BARELY KNEW HIM WHEN HE DIED.



AND YET, IN THOSE EARLY YEARS, I FELT HIM HOVERING OVER ME. LIKE A FORCE TRYING TO IMPART SOMETHING. BUT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO BUT TRY TO LIVE UP TO THE MAN HE WANTED ME TO BE.

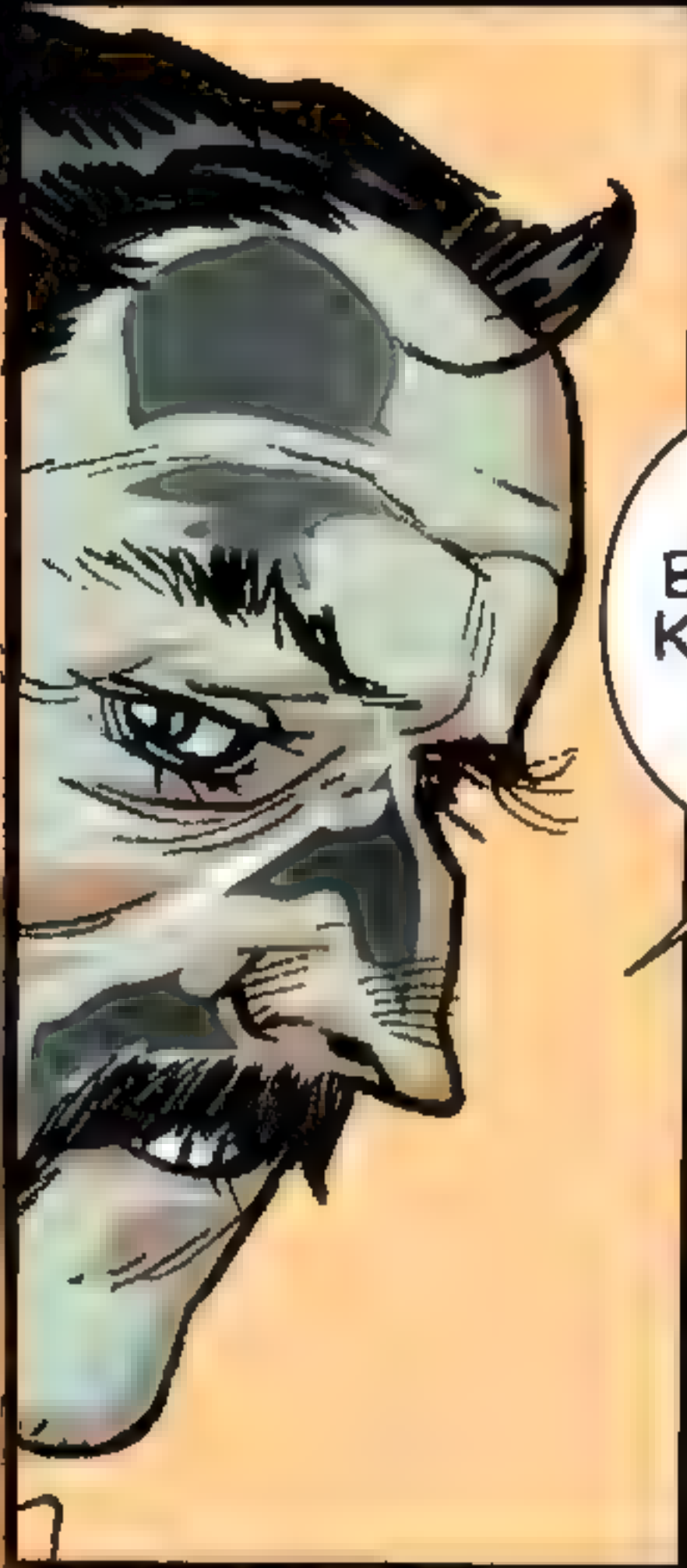
MY POINT, MASTER BRUCE, IS THAT I'VE ALREADY SPENT A LIFETIME TRYING TO DIG UP A SENSE OF WHO MY FATHER WAS.

I HAVE NO DESIRE TO LITERALIZE THE PROCESS.

IF THE COURT OF OWLS HAD ***ANYTHING*** TO DO WITH MY FATHER'S DEATH, YOUR ACTIONS THESE PAST FEW WEEKS HAVE BEEN TRIBUTE ENOUGH.



WE
COULD KNOW
FOR *SURE*,
ALFRED...



BUT THAT'S
JUST IT, MASTER
BRUCE. I ALREADY
KNOW EVERYTHING
I NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT MY
FATHER.

JUST AS YOU
DO ABOUT YOUR
DECEASED BROTHER
AND THE OUTLANDISH
CLAIMS OF LINCOLN
MARCH.

YOU KNOW
I'LL FIND LINCOLN,
ALFRED. I WILL
FIND THE
TRUTH.

YOU'LL
FIND THE
FACTS.

THE *TRUTH* IS THAT
EVEN IF YOU AND LINCOLN
SHARE THE SAME BLOOD,
YOU STILL LOST YOUR
BROTHER IN A CAR
ACCIDENT WHEN YOU
WERE JUST A BOY.



2012

I KNOW YOU'LL
DO WHAT YOU MUST,
WHEN THE TIME
ARISES.

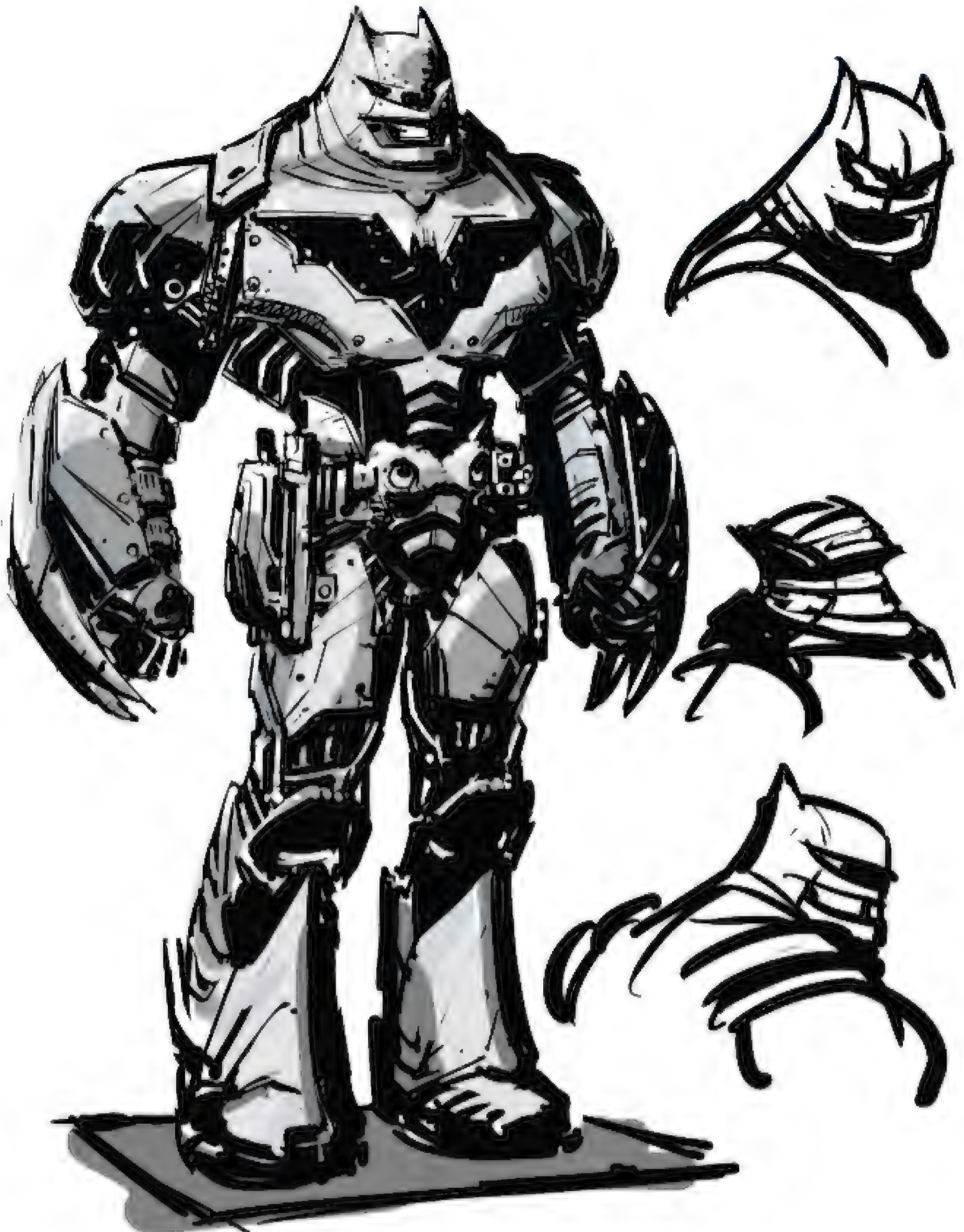
BUT FOR NOW
THE SPECTERS OF
THESE LONG LOST
KIN DESERVE TO
REST...



...UNDISTURBED.

BATMAN: NIGHT OF THE OWLS
CHARACTER DESIGNS BY GREG CAPULLO

Batman battle suit armor design





Talon of the 1660s



Talon of the 1980s



Talon of the 1700s



Talon of the 1840s

Talon of the 1870s



Talon of the 1880s

Talon of the 1940s



Talon of the 1950s

Talon of the 1880s
Design by MORITAT





"Easily the most anticipated Bat book in some time." — COMPLEX MAGAZINE

"Snyder and artist Greg Capullo once again deliver a riveting chapter of their Bat-saga... Not only is their personal familiarity with Bruce chilling, but the visual design that Capullo has come up with for the character pays off in full as we see them flock the house... Regardless, Night of the Owls has launched in fine fashion, piling on the action to the already established intrigue, leaving us truly wondering about the fate of the Bat-family." — IGN

"Destined to go down in history as a premier Batman tale. Methinks once this whole jam is over, Batman's life just might get a swift kick to the nuggets." — CRAVEONLINE

Spinning out of the *New York Times* #1 best-selling BATMAN: THE COURT OF OWLS, Gotham City is under attack, testing Batman and his allies at every turn. Can Gotham's protectors save its residents from the villainous Talon assassins, or will this be the night the Dark Knight and his city fall before evil?

Featuring contributions from SCOTT SNYDER (AMERICAN VAMPIRE), GREG CAPULLO (Spawn), JUDD WINICK (GREEN ARROW), GAIL SIMONE (THE FURY OF FIRESTORM: THE NUCLEAR MEN), TONY S. DANIEL (JUSTICE LEAGUE), DAVID FINCH (JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA) as well as some of comics' other top creators, this story unveils the epic Night of the Owls.

dccomics.com

